the weekly Standard

FEBRUARY 27, 2006

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THE MAN WHO WOULD BE LE PRÉSIDENT

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL on Nicolas Sarkozy, France's "man of the right" and most important politician

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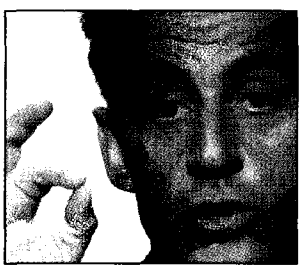

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Albert of Arabia

Remember how, in the days following 9/11, Arabs living in the United States were "indiscriminately rounded up," typically on "minor charges of overstaying a visa" or "not having a green card in proper order," then "held in conditions that were just unforgivable"? Remember how these newly captive political prisoners of the United States government were subjected to "terrible abuses"? Remember the climate of retribution and hate-mongering that pervaded the land in those terrible days?

Neither do we. But according to former vice president of the United States and current cable TV executive Al Gore, who uttered the statements quoted above, that's exactly what happened. Gore leveled these accusations against his country on February 12, in Room "Al Qasr 1" inside the Jeddah International Exhibition Center in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he was a headliner for the seventh annual Jeddah Economic Forum—a sort of Davos for the burkas-and-beheadings set.

According to that day's program, Gore's speech was supposed to be on the "IT Business," which we thought stood for information technology but maybe is Saudi shorthand for infidel-trashing. Accompanying Gore on the dais was "Moh'd Sayed Ismail from Multimedia University in Malaysia" and moderator Omar Khalifati, the "Chairman, Xenel & Computer Associations (Xeca), Saudi Arabia." Somewhere during the Q&A with the 2,700-person, majority-Saudi audience, however, Gore decided to play to the gallery.

Referring to the above-mentioned terrible crimes to which Arabs in America had been made victim, Gore assured the crowd, "I do want you to know that it does not represent the desires or wishes or feelings of the majority of the citizens of my country." When the questioning turned toward Israel, and "several audience members criticized the United States for what they described as 'unconditional' U.S. support for Israel," according to AP reporter Jim Krane, Gore dodged the issue, saying only, "We can't solve that long conflict in exchanges here."

Finally, Gore criticized immigration policies targeting countries suspected of connections to Islamist terrorism—countries like Saudi Arabia, where 15 out of the 19 9/11 hijackers had coincidentally been born. "The thoughtless way in which visas are now handled—that is a mistake," he said. "The worst thing we can possibly do is to cut off the channels of friendship and mutual understanding between Saudi Arabia and the United States."

THE SCRAPBOOK can think of a lot of even worse things than that, actually. Number one: a former vice president painting a melodramatically invidious picture of the United States in a paid speech to an audience of foreign nationals—all without ever mentioning the decidedly real human rights abuses occurring at that very second in the country writing his check.

From the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the Kingdom of Saud, 2004:

> The Government's human rights record remained poor overall with continuing serious problems, despite some progress. Citizens did not have the right to change their government. Security forces continued to abuse detainees and prisoners, arbitrarily arrest, and hold persons in incommunicado detention. There were cases in which Mutawwa'in continued to intimidate, abuse, and detain citizens and foreigners. Most trials were closed, and defendants usually appeared before judges without legal counsel. Security forces arrested and detained reformers, some of whom continued at year's end to seek an open trial. The Government reportedly infringed on individuals' privacy rights. The Government continued to restrict freedoms of speech and press, assembly, association, religion, and movement. There was widespread public perception that corruption by some members of the royal family and in the executive branch of the Government was a serious problem. There was little government transparency, especially notable in official budgets, and with no laws providing the right to access government information. The Government continued to discriminate against women, ethnic and religious minorities and to impose strict limitations on worker rights.

Fine company Gore is keeping. ♦

Bishop Robinson Update

THE SCRAPBOOK couldn't help but notice that the Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson, Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire, has entered a treatment center for alcoholism.

Ordinarily, such news doesn't make the pages of the *New York Times*, or attract the attention of THE SCRAPBOOK. But Bishop Robinson, as the *Times* lede put it, is no typical clergyman. He is "the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church." Although none of his colleagues had seen evidence of alcohol abuse, or knew of any "precipitating event" that would drive Bishop Robinson to seek treatment, he said in a message to his diocese that he

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has chosen "to deal with my increasing dependence on alcohol . . . which, for years, I have thought of as a failure of will or discipline on my part, rather than a disease over which my particular body simply has no control, except to stop drinking altogether."

While we certainly wish Mr. Robinson well in his course of treatment, from the sound of things, he seems to have the therapeutic lingo down already.

Reflecting on the bishop's surprise announcement, his assistant, the Rev. Tim Rich, said that "the pressure of the last three years has been immense." Immense, perhaps, but also self-generated. Since his appointment in 2003, which put the worldwide Anglican communion in an uproar, Bishop Robinson seems to have spent considerably more time making public appearances as the Gay Bishop than ministering to the spiritual needs of the 49 congregations in the New Hampshire diocese.

In the words of the *New York Times*, he has "marched in gay parades and received honors at conferences. In November, he traveled to England to meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, to debate at Oxford University, and be interviewed by the BBC." If Bishop Robinson were to recline on THE SCRAPBOOK's couch, we would suggest that he read his public message back to himself, substituting "being the Gay Bishop" wherever the words "alcohol" and "drinking" appear.

That may not be the kind of therapy he's seeking, but it might remind him of the duties of a priest and bishop before the next parade invitation arrives. ♦

Get Lost

The tropical island at the center of ABC's hit show *Lost* features a number of curiosities: Polar bears appear and disappear, a group of mysterious "others" are slowly picking off the survivors of Oceanic Airlines Flight 815, and a sinister black cloud races around the island, terrifying our protagonists. Oh, and there's an Iraqi torturer stuck on the island who was taught his monstrous trade by *American* troops during the first Gulf war.

In a flashback during last week's episode, we learn that our sympathetic Iraqi character was forced by an American soldier to torture a fellow Iraqi for information about a downed American chopper pilot. As he informs one of the "others" prior to beating him to a bloody pulp, "I was 23 years old when the Americans came to my country. I was a good man. I was a soldier. And when they left—I was something different. For the next six years, I did things I wish I could erase from my memory—things which I never thought myself to be capable of. . . . You want to know who I am? My name is Sayid Jarrah. And I am a torturer."

You see? Saddam's Republican guard was not full of psychotic, torturing madmen until the Americans showed up to teach them the tricks of the trade in 1991. Sounds like Al Gore's been moonlighting as a screenwriter. ♦

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Casual

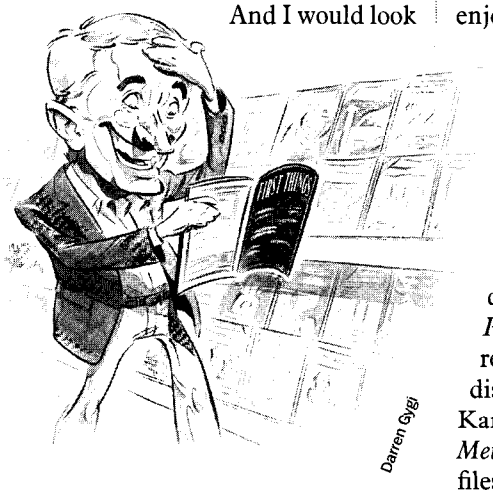
Beginner's Pluck

I got a check for $78.23 in the mail today, a reprint fee for an article I did twelve years ago on the way Charles Dickens uses names in *David Copperfield*. I'm sure you all saw it when it came out—even in those days, who missed an issue of the journal *Nineteenth-Century Literature*? But I didn't receive any money for the article at the time, and I wrote it in a period when $78.23 would have made a difference. No, let's be honest: I'm *still* in a period when $78.23 makes a difference. Back then, however, it felt a little more vital. Like, say, the difference between eating lunch and not, the last week of the month.

In fact, everything about writing felt more vital when I was starting out. The Dickens piece was the first I had an editor accept for publication, but academic journals have long lead times, and the earliest to appear in print was an essay called "Christians and Postmoderns," in the magazine *First Things*. It began, "We are living at a time near the end of the world," and I think I expected the world to tremble. The cover was a lemony kind of yellow-orange, and there was my name—*my name!*—like, you know, a real author's, in dark print on that citrus cover, for God and everybody to see.

Do all beginning writers remember their first publication this way? I haunted the bookstore, day after day, waiting for the arrival of the issue I'd been told it was in. And when the magazine came, I bought two copies: one for me and one, yes, for my mother. That evening I read the article over and over. I'm not sure why: I hadn't just written the thing; I'd practically memorized it. But there I was, reading it compulsively, wincing at the things I should have said differently, gloating over the things I liked, rising hours after I'd gone to bed to slip over to my desk and read it again, really just this one last time.

For days afterward I walked around the way I imagine celebrities do: expecting at any moment to be accosted by strangers on the street saying, "Aren't you the one who wrote that *fascinating* article? I just *loved* the tricky bit in the third paragraph about the apocalyptic imagination of environmentalists." And I would look down bashfully and reply, "Ah, no, it was really more of an occasional piece than anything important. Still, you know, we published authors like to keep our hand in." Nothing like this has happened in twelve years of writing, although somewhere deep in the delusional heart that all writers have—why else write?—I still harbor a few dreams.



Some weeks after the article appeared, an editor named Midge Decter called and asked if I wanted to review Gertrude Himmelfarb's new book on historical theory. What I knew then about historiography—what I know now about historiography, as far as that goes—would fit in a teacup, but I was afraid that if I turned the assignment down, no one would ever ask me to review again. So I said yes, and then *Commentary* magazine asked me for a review, and then *National Review* asked for another, and pretty soon I was reviewing for an in-flight airline magazine a book on scuba diving, which I've never done, in the South Pacific, where I've never been.

It all seemed so easy. I thought I would be the only writer in America publishing in both the *Review of Metaphysics* and *TV Guide*. I imagined—oh, I don't know, perhaps that writing came from an infinite well, and it could be ladled out to measure. Want 5,000 words on the Roman Stoics' use of Greek physics? Of course. Want 500 words on NBC's latest crop of sitcoms? I can do that, too.

Except I couldn't. The two most enjoyable topics to write about—or read about, for that matter—are gossip and metaphysics. But they need to be handled in slightly different ways, and I soon found myself trying to write about Aristotle with the breathlessness of *Variety*, and the cast of *The X-Files* with the ponderousness of the *International Philosophical Quarterly*. Even my reading started to get peculiar, and I discovered I was studying Immanuel Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* and the personality profiles in *Parade* magazine with roughly the same close attention to detail.

Someday—did I mention the delusional heart of writers?—I'll solve this problem. Meanwhile, looking at my new check for that early article, I feel almost like an American success story: Go into magazine work, kids, and in only a dozen years you too can be banking $78.23! Of course, it's also a story of decline, for nothing since has felt quite as exhilarating as that first time I held a magazine with something I'd written in it—the crisp cover I opened as carefully as I could so it wouldn't crease, the inky smell of the paper inside, the bumpy feel of the lettering as I ran my finger gently over my name.

Joseph Bottum

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Straight talk on earnings

"**Oil company** earnings are too high."

That's the word on Main Street, for sure. But on Wall Street, there's a somewhat different perspective on oil industry earnings.

What many may find surprising is that, on average over the past five years, the profitability of America's oil and natural gas industry is far less than many other major industries, like banks, pharmaceuticals and real estate.

Part of the explanation is that it costs a lot just to operate an oil, refining and natural gas company. Ours is a competitive, high-technology and engineering business of massive scale that produces and sells commodities. It costs billions of dollars to explore for, produce, refine and distribute the products consumers need.

It requires billions more dollars to maintain the delivery system necessary to ensure a reliable supply of energy and to make sure it efficiently gets where it needs to go: to you, our customers.

We're committed to making the necessary reinvestments to ensure our nation has a stable and reliable supply of energy today and tomorrow.

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Be-Weare of EmDo

Since I was the person who invoked the word "vigilante" in the David Souter debate, I wish to correct something in Matt Labash's otherwise fine "Evicting David Souter" (Feb. 13). He correctly points out that vigilantism is using illegal means to render justice. He then states incorrectly that what Logan Darrow Clements proposes is legal. Two New Hampshire statutes apply to Clements's proposal. The first law states that private funds may not be used to fund a public trust fund; the second says that eminent domain may not be applied punitively or in bad faith. Clements's actions are illegal in two very specific ways.

The voters of Weare, New Hampshire, are well versed in political shenanigans, which is why the amended version of Clements's proposal (what the town will vote on) was passed unanimously (out of nearly 150 voters). When the moderator called for the nays, we heard silence. It was a miraculous moment and a demonstration of democracy at its finest.

We in New Hampshire see guys like Clements every day, and we are immune to it. New Hampshire voters are more than politically astute; we are geniuses. That's why we deserve to have the first primary and why Clements's absurd proposal never stood a chance.

Joe Fiala
Weare, N.H.

Matt Labash responds: While I am always hesitant to argue with geniuses, even self-proclaimed ones, a few of Joe Fiala's stipulations warrant rebuttal. Whether or not private funds may be used to start a public trust fund, suggesting the proposal is "illegal" on those grounds is a moot technicality, since the warrant article was nonbinding in the first place. It was merely intended to demonstrate support for taking Souter's property.

Fiala also claims, as one of the "two very specific ways" that Clements's crusade is illegal, that "eminent domain may not be applied punitively or in bad faith." Not too specific, it turns out. When I asked Fiala to specify which statute he was referring to, he replied: "I quickly Googled [the New Hampshire Revised Statutes]. It's in there somewhere." After not finding it, I asked him to be more specific. He reviewed his notes, writing back: "I may have misunderstood the advice of our attorney regarding a statute pertaining to 'bad faith.'"

While we're splitting hairs over statutes, Fiala may want to review the legality of the rewritten article that he and his cronies forced down the gullets of the Weare electorate. It now asks that eminent domain powers not be used to take David Souter's home. Under the New Hampshire constitution's bill of rights, the "right of revolution," set forth in Article 10, mandates that government be "instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security, of the whole community, and not for the private interest or emolument of any one man."

Even more curious is Fiala's claim that the actions he and his allies took by rewriting the warrant article represented "democracy at its finest." Democracy typically involves putting something to a vote. Fiala and friends sought to suppress a vote by not letting the warrant article reach the ballot, perhaps fearing its passage. Fiala is to be commended that he, like Clements, opposes eminent domain abuse. But, as Clements has recently written, "Is it unjust to demand that those in power live under their own rulings? What could be a more fitting approach to countering their unjust law and rulings than simply to demand that they live under those very laws and rulings themselves? . . . David Souter, whose net worth is estimated to be between $5 million and $25 million . . . can easily afford to hire lawyers. Homeowners nationwide, however, are losing their life savings paying legal bills to defend their homes against eminent domain actions."

Media: Biased or Stupid?

Hugh Hewitt scoffs at the Columbia School of Journalism ("The Media's Ancien Régime," Jan. 30) for focusing on analytical and research skills instead of addressing the overriding problem of media bias. Having studied reporters' attitudes and coverage, I have found that much misreporting that is attributed to "bias" reflects an inability to judge the empirical data that are typically used to buttress policy arguments. This in turn rests on a failure to understand not just scientific method but systematic and analytical thinking in general. Granted, clearer thinking will not eliminate all bias, but even well-meaning reporters will never transcend their unconscious ideological assumptions until they learn to follow the numbers and the arguments.

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Need to Know

"Where was the nuclear material transported to?" asks an aide to Saddam Hussein, in a taped conversation released last week. He answers his own question: "A number of them were transported out of Iraq." This provocative snippet is part of 12 hours of taped exchanges between Saddam Hussein and his advisers. The tapes were found in Iraq after the war and were released last week by their American translator. The tapes are authentic. And they are seemingly of little interest to the U.S. government. A spokesman for John Negroponte, the director of national intelligence (DNI), downplayed their importance: "Analysts from the CIA and the DIA reviewed the translations and found that, while fascinating from a historical perspective, the tapes do not reveal anything that changes their postwar analysis of Iraq's weapons programs."

We suspect many Americans would be interested in learning more about this "nuclear material" and where it went when it was "transported out of Iraq"—and not just for "historical perspective." That doesn't mean the Saddam tapes contain some "smoking gun" on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. We don't yet know the circumstances of the Iraqi aide's conversation with his boss, or whether he was being truthful. It would certainly be nice to know more.

Unfortunately, Negroponte's dismissive attitude toward the 12 hours of Saddam tapes seems to reflect accurately the attitude of the intelligence community toward all of the documents captured in postwar Afghanistan and Iraq. It's an attitude his boss apparently doesn't share. Meeting with congressional leaders last Thursday, President George W. Bush said he wants the documents released, and released quickly.

For months, though, Negroponte and his staff have been in a tug-of-war with House Intelligence Committee chairman Peter Hoekstra, who is leading the effort to have the captured Iraqi documents released. As Stephen F. Hayes has reported on several occasions in this magazine, the U.S. government has more than two million "exploitable items" recovered in Afghanistan and Iraq since October 2001. And though there has been much talk of expediting the release of this material, Negroponte has stalled.

Late last week, a top DNI staffer met with Hoekstra. The meeting did not go well. "If there are 100 reasons not to make this information available, I got every one of them," Hoekstra told THE WEEKLY STANDARD last week. "We have received a proposal that clearly demonstrates that the DNI is living in the analog age while the rest of us are in the digital age. At this rate, my grandkids and great-grandkids will be the first ones to see this information. And I don't even have grandkids yet."

The DNI proposal calls for small sets of documents to be farmed out to researchers at think tanks and universities. The documents would be scrubbed for sensitive information, and researchers would be required to sign nondisclosure agreements. The researchers could later request that documents be released to accompany publication of their work. At which point the documents would be subject to another review for sensitive information. How long would this process take? Did we mention that the DNI recently took two months to provide an insistent chairman of the House Intelligence Committee with a few dozen unclassified documents from Iraq that he had requested?

A glimpse of how this process might work could be seen with the release last week of a study about al Qaeda by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, accompanied by a small collection of documents captured in postwar Afghanistan. The researchers tell us in their foreword that the 28 documents were being released "so that they can be analyzed and used to learn more about al Qaeda and better understand the organization." Making these documents available for additional study "is critical to developing an effective long-term counterterrorism strategy."

The documents are indeed interesting. According to one document, Osama bin Laden's chief deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, sought assistance for his terrorist operations from both Iraq and Iran. Another al Qaeda document by an unknown author provides some "lessons learned" from the experience of the past jihadist-Iraq collaboration and concludes that such relationships can be counterproductive and are to be avoided in the future. Other documents offer insight into the personal and ideological conflicts among al Qaeda's senior operatives. In short, we know more now than we did a week ago.

But this is the first such glimpse in the more than four years since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. And the Saddam tapes released last week, no thanks to the intelligence community, are a sliver of the 3,000-some hours of recordings of Saddam Hussein meeting with top aides.

If President Bush believes such materials should be released, as he has assured several members of Congress, he might at least pick up the phone and have a talk with John Negroponte. This material is too important to wait for Rep. Hoekstra's great-grandkids.

—The Editors

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Well, Can't Cantwell Be Beat?

Washington Republicans are optimistic, for a change. **BY FRED BARNES**

Mike McGavick

AP / Ted S. Warren

Seattle

REPUBLICANS haven't won a statewide election in Washington state for a top-tier office (president, Senate, governor) since 1994. President Bush lost the state by five percentage points in 2000, seven in 2004. Over the past 75 years, Republicans have won Senate races in Washington only five times. And three of those victories were achieved by a single person, Slade Gorton, who was defeated for reelection in 2000. "This is a miserable state" for Republicans, Gorton says. And 2006 "isn't a good year."

It gets worse. Washington has none of the attributes of a red state. Traditional values are not a primary concern. Political correctness is. Washington is the most secular state in the country, as measured by regular church attendance. So the political network of evangelical Christians here is relatively small. And it is well-off, a problem because upper middle class voters here tend to be liberal. In 2004, John Kerry beat President Bush among Washington voters with more than $100,000 in income. Last, a statewide candidate had better care about the environment. "Everybody here is an environmentalist," says Chris Vance, who recently stepped down as Republican state chairman.

Yet despite these obstacles, Republicans have a realistic chance of capturing the Senate seat now held by Democrat Maria Cantwell, 47, who ousted Gorton six years ago. The reason is the Republican candidate, Mike McGavick, a former insurance executive and titan of the Seattle business and civic community. To be successful in Washington, Vance says, a Republican candidate must be "conservative enough to unite the base, moderate enough to win." And McGavick, 48, "fits perfectly." The McGavick election strategy, says his campaign manager, Ian Goodnow, is simple: "It's him."

McGavick is a protégé of Gorton, having served as a foreign policy adviser, then as chief of staff in Gorton's Senate office. In the 1990s, he worked in the insurance industry in Chicago, which led to his becoming a widely respected figure in Seattle when he turned around Safeco, the insurance giant headquartered here.

Safeco lost $1 billion in 2001, and McGavick was summoned to revive the company. He cut the payroll, slashed administrative expenses, and trimmed the lines of insurance the company offered. Safeco made a profit of $300 million the next year. McGavick announced his plans to leave Safeco and run for the Senate last year. This is his first race for public office.

He quickly managed to clear the Republican field, impressing Republican national chairman Ken Mehlman and Karl Rove, the White House political adviser, with his political skill. First, state Republican chair Diane Tebelius decided not to run. Then a popular former TV news anchor in Seattle, Susan Hutchison, announced she wouldn't take on McGavick in a primary battle.

The primary in Washington comes in mid-September. This puts a challenger at a distinct disadvantage with only weeks to focus on an incumbent in the general election. "If we'd had a primary challenge, we'd have won, but it would have hurt us," says Goodnow. With McGavick as the party's lone candidate, the state Republican central committee was able to endorse him last month, making him eligible to receive party funds immediately.

McGavick is hard to pigeonhole

Fred Barnes, executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is author of* Rebel-in-Chief, *published by Crown Forum.*

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ideologically. "I refuse to self-label," he told me. "I certainly come from a conservative tradition." But his models in the Senate are Republican John McCain of Arizona and Democrat Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, both mavericks. "They demonstrate that the go-along, get-along mentality is not what makes you a leader," he said.

A moderate on social issues, McGavick would back the federal marriage amendment as a last resort to block same-sex marriage. He's a conventional Republican in his support of tax cuts and in his wariness of creating government programs. He agrees with Bush's approach to fighting terrorism and supports the president on Iraq. He also talks up early childhood education, poverty, and other issues not viewed as Republican staples.

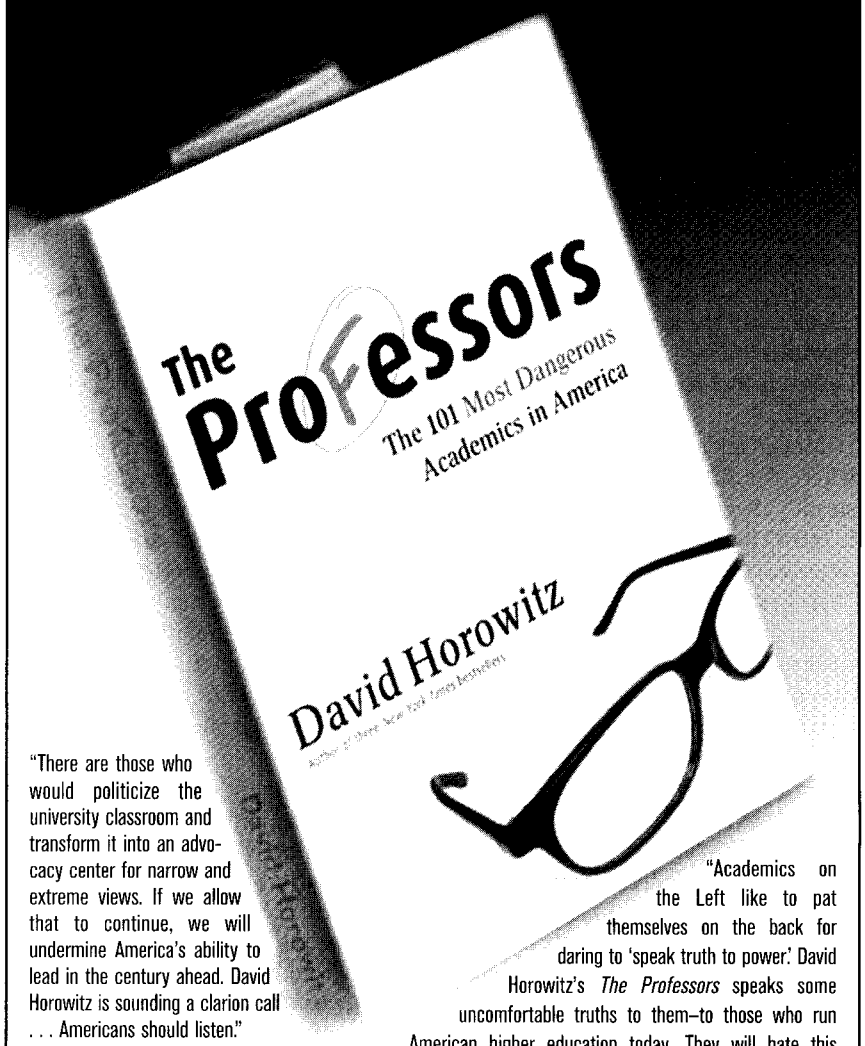
McGavick has taken one position that is normal for a Republican but odd for an environmentalist and is sure to stir a fierce debate with Cantwell. (He does consider himself an environmentalist. "You only live here because it's pretty," he told me. "It's too wet in the west and too dry in the east.") He favors oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a position anathema to the environmental lobby.

Cantwell has clashed noisily with Republican senator Ted Stevens of Alaska over ANWR and declared that she's "willing to use every tool at my disposal to stop drilling in the Arctic." After losing the battle over ANWR drilling last December, Stevens vowed to "visit Washington many, many times" in 2006 to campaign against her. Gorton lauds McGavick's position on ANWR as "courageous." It's also politically risky.

Unlike McGavick, Cantwell is not a Washington native. She came to the state in 1983 to work for the Democratic presidential campaign of then-Senator Alan Cranston of California. He lost, but she stayed and in 1992 was elected to a single term in the U.S. House. In 1995, she joined a software startup, RealNetworks, and by 1999 her stock portfolio was worth $40 million. In 2000, she spent more than $10 million of her own money to oust Gor-

"While mediocrity and incompetence have always had a place in the academic world, never before in the history of the modern research university have entire departments and fields been devoted to purely ideological pursuits. Nor has overt propagandizing had such a respected and prominent place in university classrooms. Even more disturbingly, the last few decades mark the first time in their history that America's institutions of higher learning have become a haven for extremists."

–The Professors



"There are those who would politicize the university classroom and transform it into an advocacy center for narrow and extreme views. If we allow that to continue, we will undermine America's ability to lead in the century ahead. David Horowitz is sounding a clarion call . . . Americans should listen."

–Representative Jerry Lewis, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee

"Academics on the Left like to pat themselves on the back for daring to 'speak truth to power.' David Horowitz's *The Professors* speaks some uncomfortable truths to them–to those who run American higher education today. They will hate this scathing critique, but will be hardpressed to answer his charges."

–Professors Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom, Harvard University

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ton. She nearly doubled his campaign's expenditures and bombarded the state with TV ads in the final weeks. She won by 2,200 votes.

Is Cantwell vulnerable? Her personal fortune is gone, along with the dot-com bubble. She's irritated some liberals by voting for the Iraq war, the Patriot Act, and cloture to shut off a filibuster of Supreme Court nominee Sam Alito. But she's held a double-digit lead over McGavick in the polls for months.

Vance, the ex-Republican chairman, insists Washington is not a knee-jerk Democratic state. "If both sides have good candidates that are well financed, you end up with a dead heat," he says. That's what happened in the governor's race in 2004, the contest for secretary of state in 2002, and the Cantwell-Gorton election in 2000. All three wound up with recounts. The best guess is the Cantwell-McGavick race will be tight as well.

McGavick's problem is Seattle, where the Republican vote has been steadily dwindling in recent years and is now below 20 percent. Gorton describes the city, in political terms, as "San Francisco north or Boston west. In everything but geography, it's an eastern city." But trashing Seattle doesn't work for Republicans as a campaign tactic. Rather, the key is to concentrate on the crescent of suburbs around Seattle. The eastern part of the state is solidly Republican and, as Vance put it, "as conservative as Idaho." But it is far less populous than the Seattle area.

Once the campaign is fully engaged later this year, it's bound to get rough. Cantwell is a tough and experienced political operator. Democrats have already begun attacking McGavick as a cruel and insensitive corporate chief. When he toured the state last month, protesters showed up wearing yellow T-shirts with "Abramoff-McGavick 2006" on the back. McGavick says he's never met Abramoff, the disgraced Republican lobbyist, much less had dealings with him. Chances are, that won't stop Democrats from invoking Abramoff's name again and again. ♦

Cash-for-Kofi

The U.N. secretary-general wins a half-million dollar prize in Dubai. BY CLAUDIA ROSETT

DESPITE FREQUENT declarations of reform, it seems that United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has learned nothing from the U.N.'s Oil-for-Food scandal, in which Saddam Hussein's billions corrupted the U.N.'s entire Iraq embargo bureaucracy. Earlier this month, Annan accepted from the ruler of Dubai an environmental prize of $500,000—a fat sum that represents the latest in a long series of glaring conflicts of interest. Call this one Cash-for-Kofi.

Annan received his award at a glittering February 6 ceremony in Dubai, as outlined in a press release from Annan's office that noted the honor, but neglected to mention the half million bucks that came with it. Surrounded by presidents, businessmen, and nearly 130 environmental ministers, Annan collected this purse as winner of the biennial Zayed International Prize for the Environment, given out by the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.

So entwined were Annan's own U.N. colleagues in the process that selected him for this award that it's tempting to relabel the entire affair as one of the U.N.'s biggest back-scratching contests. Chairing the jury panel, which voted unanimously for Annan, was the executive director of the U.N. Environment Program, Klaus Toepfer, and among the jurors was the U.N. undersecretary-general for Economic and Social Affairs, José Antonio Ocampo. Both men owe their current jobs to Annan. Serving as an "observer" of the jury panel was Pakistan's ambassador to the U.N., Munir Akram, who just finished a term as president of the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council, which works closely with Annan. On the website for the Zayed prize, the public relations contacts include a U.N. staffer, Nick Nuttall, listed complete with his U.N. email account and phone number at the Nairobi headquarters of the U.N. Environment Program.

But let us assume these folks were impartial. It's possible that with the Zayed prize already handed out in earlier years to Jimmy Carter and the BBC, the depleted global pool held no candidate more worthy than Annan.

The real issue is why on earth Kofi Annan thinks it a good idea while serving as secretary-general to accept $500,000—for any reason—from a high-ranking official of a U.N. member state. Sheikh Mohammed is not only the ruler of Dubai but the vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates. No doubt he bestowed this award as a gesture of appreciation. But if the other 190 U.N. member states were to follow his lead, Annan would be rolling in $95 million worth of personal prize money. Once the secretary-general allows himself to become a collector of cash awards, where's the line to be drawn? If Syria were to offer him a $10 million environmental prize, or China were to up the ante to $100 million, should he grab a suitcase and go pick it up?

Annan accepted the Dubai prize on the heels of setting up an ethics office within the U.N. Secretariat just last month. He has recently issued guidelines requiring staff to report any gifts of more than $250, down from previous guidelines that smiled on the acceptance of doo-dads worth up to $10,000. Staff rules do not apply to the secretary-general himself, who is presumed to operate as an exemplary civil servant. But one wonders what U.N.

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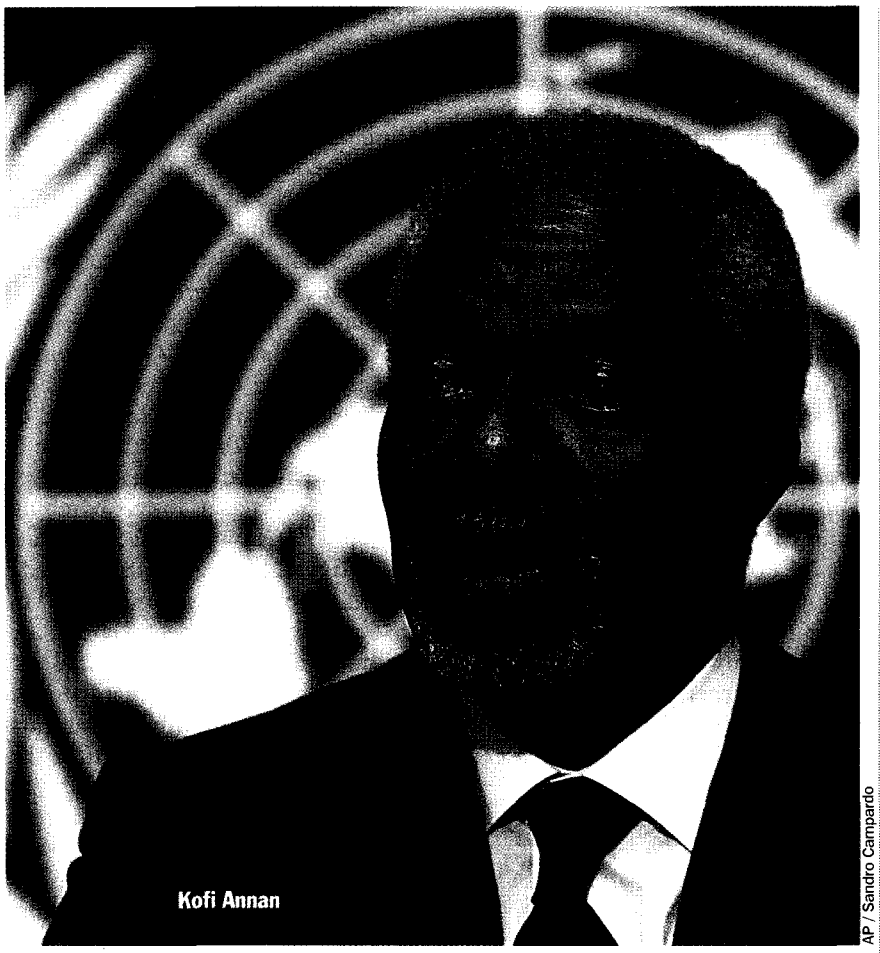
Kofi Annan

AP / Sandro Campardo

employees will make of their boss's big purse. Just last summer, a former U.N. procurement officer, Alexander Yakovlev, pleaded guilty in a U.S. federal court to taking hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of bribes involving taxpayer-funded U.N. contracts. Annan's secretariat has yet to get to the bottom of this still-spreading scandal in its own procurement department. Imagine for a moment that U.N. contractors were to start holding contests for the world's finest procurement officer, and began handing out big cash prizes to U.N. officials. Should the secretary-general then congratulate the winners—or investigate them?

Not unaware of appearances, Annan announced at the Dubai award ceremony that he would be using his prize as seed money for a foundation he plans to set up in Africa, devoted to agriculture and girls' education. To date, he has provided no information about what this promised foundation might be or who will run it, or what perquisites might go to its founder, or to anyone else associated with it. Asked recently for details, Annan's spokesman replied, "When we have more information, we'll pass it on to you."

Such non-answers have a familiar ring to anyone who has followed the saga of the sporty green Mercedes, shipped into Ghana in 1998 by Annan's son, Kojo Annan, who saved $14,000 in customs duties at the time via inappropriate use of his father's name and U.N. privileges. In that instance, the transaction was obscured behind a humanitarian façade, with the U.N. Development Program office in Ghana setting its U.N. seal on the paperwork. Annan, despite wiring his son $15,000 to help pay for the car, claims he knew nothing about it, and that it had nothing to do with him or the U.N. Perhaps Annan intends to more carefully supervise and account for his prize-seeded future foundation; but it must be admitted that the Mercedes experience is not a promising portent.

Nor is it a good sign that Annan, while enthusing about his prize in Dubai, appeared to have forgotten—if he ever took it on board in the first place—that from 1999-2003, Dubai was one of the hubs of kickback activity under the Oil-for-Food program. According to the U.S. Treasury and the U.N.'s own probe, led by Paul Volcker, at least two major front companies for Saddam Hussein's regime set up shop in Dubai: Al Hoda and Al Wasel & Babel. Between them, they secured more than $500 million worth of U.N.-approved contracts, and funneled tens of millions in kickbacks to Saddam. Volcker reports that a Dubai businessman, Ibrahim Lootah, owned 51 percent of one of these companies, Al Wasel & Babel, which received a commission for kickbacks processed through its account. Asked last year by Volcker's investigators about this commission, Lootah replied, "Why not get easy money?"

Why not, indeed? While the United States, India, Australia, and even France have investigated Oil-for-Food wrongdoing by their citizens, there is no sign Dubai has opened any such inquiry. Nor is there any sign that Annan ever brought it up with them. That's no surprise, given that in London, a week before receiving his prize, he brushed aside the entire Oil-for-Food debacle with the astounding phrase, "If there was a scandal."

If this year's Zayed prize money from Sheikh Mohammed of Dubai is to be dedicated to helping Africa, as we have been told, there is no good reason to channel the funds through the wallet of the U.N. secretary-general. Under the U.N. charter, Annan is paid to serve as the U.N.'s chief administrative officer, not its Prize Recipient-in-Chief. If Annan feels he cannot with good grace reject the honor of the Zayed prize, then in the interest of curbing future scandals, he might at least return the purse. ♦

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Iran Amok

Tehran plays host to al Qaeda.

BY DAN DARLING

"IRAN CONTINUES to host senior al Qaeda leaders who are wanted for murdering Americans and other victims in the 1998 East Africa Embassy bombings. We have called repeatedly for these terrorists to be handed over to states that will prosecute them and bring them to justice. We believe that some al Qaeda members and those from like-minded extremist groups continue to use Iran as a safe haven and as a hub to facilitate their operations."

So said a high State Department official in a speech in Washington on November 30. The assertions by Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns were nothing new. Though often overlooked, they have been the position of the U.S. government for some time. As discussion of Iran's nuclear program and its hardline president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad intensifies, Iranian aid to al Qaeda should not be allowed to drop off the radar screen.

A careful review of what is known about this matter—even a review confined to public sources—shows that Iran has long maintained ties to al Qaeda and has assisted the group in refining its terrorist capabilities. During the years of Taliban rule, Tehran allowed al Qaeda members, including some future 9/11 hijackers, to transit its territory en route to and from Afghanistan. Nor has this support waned since the Taliban's fall. To this day, much of the surviving al Qaeda leadership is based in Iran, enjoying the protection of the Revolutionary Guards Corps.

Tehran has been supporting terrorist groups ever since the mullahs came to power in 1979. According to the State Department's annual report *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, the Shiite regime has aided outfits as ideologically and religiously diverse as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, GIA, GSPC, and Hizb-e-Islami—all of them Sunni Muslim—along with the Marxist groups Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK)—that last, despite Iran's concern over any move towards autonomy on the part of its own Kurdish minority. Clearly, the mullahs do not consider ideological or religious purity a prerequisite for cooperation.

It is not surprising, then, to find the *9/11 Commission Report* tracing Iranian involvement with al Qaeda as far back as the early 1990s. "In late 1991 or early 1992," the report says,

> discussions in Sudan between al Qaeda and Iranian operatives led to an informal agreement to cooperate in providing support—even if only training—for actions carried out against Israel and the United States. Not long afterward, senior al Qaeda operatives and trainers traveled to Iran to receive training in explosives.

Contrary to much academic opinion, the commission noted that "Sunni-Shia divisions did not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier to cooperation in terrorist operations."

More training took place in Lebanon. Says the 9/11 report, "In the fall of 1993, another such [al Qaeda] delegation went to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon," a longtime stronghold of Hezbollah, "for further training in explosives as well as in intelligence and security. Bin Laden reportedly showed particular interest in learning how to use truck bombs such as the one that had killed 241 U.S. Marines in Lebanon in 1983," the heaviest U.S. loss in a single engagement since the Vietnam war. According to Rohan Gunaratna's *Inside Al Qaeda*, among the al Qaeda members who traveled to Lebanon was Saif al-Adel, a senior leader who would later emerge as a key figure in Iran's relationship with Osama bin Laden's group.

Contacts between "Iranian security officials and senior al Qaeda figures [persisted] after bin Laden's return to Afghanistan" in 1996, according to the 9/11 report. In particular, there is "strong" evidence of Iranian involvement in the Khobar Towers bombing of June 1996, in which 19 Americans died, as well as "signs that al Qaeda played some role, as yet unknown," in that attack. Two years later, the Clinton administration's formal indictment of bin Laden charged that he was allied with both Iran and its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah. After the USS *Cole* bombing in 2000, the 9/11 report says, Iran made a "concerted effort" to "strengthen relations with al Qaeda."

More ominously, the 9/11 Commission describes as "strong" the evidence, provided by al Qaeda operatives in U.S. custody, that "Iran facilitated the transit of al Qaeda members into and out of Afghanistan before 9/11, and that some of these were future 9/11 hijackers. There is also circumstantial evidence that senior Hezbollah operatives were closely tracking the travel of some of these future muscle hijackers into Iran in November 2000." While finding no evidence that Iran or Hezbollah was aware of the planning for the 9/11 attack, the commission concluded that "this topic requires further investigation by the U.S. government."

Whether the government ever followed up is doubtful, given U.S. officials' frequent assurances that Iran was not involved in the 9/11 attacks—a claim not found in the 9/11 report. Yet in July 2004, the *New York Times* did report that "the United States was actively investigating ties between the Iranian government and al Qaeda, including intelligence unearthed by

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the independent 9/11 Commission showing that Iran may have offered safe passage to terrorists who were later involved in the attacks." The *Times* quoted President Bush as saying, "We will continue to look and see if the Iranians were involved."

If a serious investigation of these events was indeed launched following the publication of the commission's final report on July 22, 2004, it would seem to be in the public interest to disclose what, if anything, the inquiry turned up. What do we know about these events now that we didn't know in 2004?

Since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, al Qaeda's relationship with Iran appears to have grown stronger. As the *Washington Post* reported in September 2003, "After the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the locus of al Qaeda's degraded leadership moved to Iran. The Iranian security services, which answer to the country's powerful Islamic clerics, protected the leadership." The *Post* identified these leaders as al Qaeda military chief Saif al-Adel, chief ideologue Mahfouz Ould Walid, finance chief Abu Mohammed al-Masri, al Qaeda second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri's deputy Abu Khayr, propaganda chief Suleiman Abu Ghaith, and Osama bin Laden's son and heir apparent, Saad.

The al Qaeda leadership appears to have operated more or less with impunity inside Iran until May 2003, thanks to its close ties to the elite Qods Force unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Citing a European intelligence official, the *Post* noted that after the fall of the Taliban, Zawahiri (whose relationship with Qods Force goes back at least a decade), negotiated safe harbor in Iran for much of the surviving al Qaeda leadership. Numerous media reports listed then-future Iraqi insurgent leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi among them. As a European intelligence analyst explained to the *Washington Post* in October 2003, Qods Force is "a state within a state, and that is why they are able to offer protection to al Qaeda. The force's senior leaders have long-standing ties to al Qaeda and, since the fall of Afghanistan, have provided some al Qaeda leaders with travel documents and safe haven." It was from Iran that al Qaeda military chief Saif al-Adel ordered the May 2003 Riyadh bombings in Saudi Arabia that killed 34, including 8 Americans.

Since late 2003, the exact status of the al Qaeda leaders in Iran has been murky at best. The Iranian government claims that any al Qaeda members on its territory are in custody. But what kind of custody? MSNBC's Investigative Unit noted in June 2005,

> According to reports in the Arab media, [the al Qaeda leaders] were rounded up and taken to two locations guarded by Iran's Revolutionary Guards: one in villas in the Namak Abrud region, near the town of Chalous on the Caspian coast, 60 miles north of Tehran, and the other in Lavizan, a region northwest of the capital that also houses a large military complex.

The London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* further reported in July 2004: "More than 384 members of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organisations are present in Iran, including 18 senior leaders of Osama bin Laden's network." The paper attributed the information to a source close to the Iranian presidency. When Tom Brokaw asked CIA director Porter Goss about the al Qaeda leaders active in Iran, Goss answered, "I think your understanding is that there is a group of leadership of al Qaeda under some type of detention—I don't know exactly what type, necessarily—in Iran is probably accurate."

Most of the reporting on the al Qaeda leaders in Iran has assumed that the individuals in question are being constrained in their activities and that the regime could be persuaded to hand them over in return for certain concessions—such as the release of the leadership of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, a Marxist anti-Iranian terrorist group that was extensively supported by Saddam Hussein and many of whose members were captured by U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

But it is not so clear that Iran has a vested interest in constraining the activities of al Qaeda. In August 2004, *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* quoted an Iranian official who had attended an Iranian military seminar where Qods Force commander Brigadier General Suleimani stated that Zarqawi and 20 senior members of the terrorist group Ansar al-Islam were allowed to enter Iran whenever they wanted through border crossings between Halabja and Ilam in Iraq. When asked why Iran would support Zarqawi given his anti-Shiite activities, Suleimani replied that Zarqawi's actions in Iraq "serve the supreme interests of Iran" by preventing the creation of a pro-U.S. government.

Examples of al Qaeda's continued activity inside Iran abound. In February 2004, noted Spanish terrorism judge Baltasar Garzon told *El Periodico* that al Qaeda's "board of managers" were active inside Iran but were more involved in coordinating operations than in issuing orders. In July 2004, Agence France-Presse quoted a French counterterrorism official as saying that al Qaeda leaders had "controlled freedom of movement" inside Iran, while the *Los Angeles Times* of August 1, 2004, quoted a top French law enforcement official as saying, "The Iranians play a double game. . . . They have arrested important Al Qaeda people, but they have permitted other important Al Qaeda people to operate."

This view is supported by the German magazine *Cicero*, which in October 2005 quoted a high-ranking intelligence officer as saying of the Iran-based al Qaeda leaders, "This is not prison or house arrest. . . . They are free to do as they please." *Cicero* had earlier that year reported on al Qaeda-in-Iraq leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi, quoting extensively from German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation documents that collated data from German, American, French, and Israeli intelligence sources. These documents, some of which were classified, listed Zarqawi's activities, pass-

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ports, phone numbers, benefactors, and the mosques used or controlled by his followers in Germany. In addition to confirming much of the evidence presented by Colin Powell to the United Nations Security Council on the activities of Zarqawi's network in Europe, the documents state point-blank that Iran "provided al Zarqawi with logistical support on the part of the state."

In sum, the publicly available evidence suggests that Undersecretary Burns was well within his rights to speak as he did last November of Iranian support for al Qaeda. The problem has received too little attention, considering the need to prevent the al Qaeda leadership from reconstituting itself if another major attack is to be prevented. ♦

He'll Be Back

Schwarzenegger, off the ropes.

BY K.E. GRUBBS JR.

Sacramento

THE ACCIDENT on Mandeville Canyon Road, in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles, happened more than a month ago, and if it's now barely a footnote to history, the image has nevertheless stamped itself on California.

Not exactly that Nick Nolte image: craggy-faced screen star, facing the booking officer's camera after a wanton drive down the Pacific Coast Highway; now looking, his hair a greasy tangle, as if he'd just come off Skid Row. But the infamous picture certainly came to mind.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, screen star turned governor of the largest state, had the night before experienced a traffic mishap. Riding his motorcycle unlicensed, his teenaged son in the sidecar, he'd encountered a Brentwood neighbor backing out of a driveway. Minor collision. If you watched Jay Leno, not to mention the nightly news, you know all about it.

But that picture is now indelible. Gone was the confident coif, the straight comb-back that projected a political rising star, the style that replaced the pre-Terminator bangs. Instead, perhaps owing to a fast change after a night in the emergency room, the strands were spikier, uncontrolled. The morning press conference was meant to assure the state's continuing calm. The puffed upper lip, arced by fifteen stitches, instead suggested the downward spiral of a man who'd lost control.

A Pat Robertson explanation even suggested itself: divine retribution for all the unseemly smooches? Had the governor abandoned the damsel he'd brought to the party? Had he forsaken the GOP at the punchbowl as a Democratic floozy flounced by?

We know the tale: Routed in November when voters rejected the four initiatives of his special-election reform package, Gov. Schwarzenegger clawed his way abjectly back through the dust. He'd been wrong, he told voters even before the election, vowing to move back to the center. To do that, he chose Susan Kennedy, cabinet secretary for his predecessor and a left-leaning Democrat, to run his office.

When I wrote in these pages about the subsequent outrage ("Arnold Agonistes," December 26, 2005), it hadn't dissipated. Republicans, whose organization brought him to power in the 2003 recall, felt jilted, some even circulating a petition, itself now withdrawn, to withdraw the party's endorsement if the governor didn't sack Ms. Kennedy forthwith.

The next scenes of this action flick give ambiguous encouragement to the governor. A capsule comeback chronology:

• In early January, Gov. Schwarzenegger, in his State of the State speech, made conciliatory gestures to both parties. He singled out for praise both Republican senator Tom McClintock, the conservative hero, and Democratic senator Martha Escutia, a liberal advocate of school spending. He seemed buoyed, the November defeat and the Kennedy fallout behind him.

• Days later, he unveiled his 2006-07 budget, all $125.6 billion of it, prompting the Democrat-friendly *Sacramento Bee* to complain he'd lost his chance "to buck the autopilot spending," mandated by an accumu-

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lation of previous ballot propositions, on schools, transportation, and even stem-cell research. There remains a $6 billion deficit to close in 2007-08.

• Defying the eternal wisdom of his onetime economic mentor, Nobelist Milton Friedman, the governor signed on to a one-dollar minimum wage increase, thereby inviting a rise in unemployed youths and untrained workers.

• Apparently deciding his legacy would hinge on relief for stressed motorists and Katrina-anxious flood-plain dwellers, he called for $68 billion in bonded indebtedness for road-building and dam-strengthening. Big spending was back.

• As number-crunchers across the spectrum complained, the public seemed to like the governor's bipartisan tone. In late January, the Public Policy Institute of California released its survey numbers. Schwarzenegger's approval among likely voters had jumped from 38 percent in October to 45 percent in January. Maybe they warmed to the battered look.

So Schwarzenegger took heart and felt emboldened to refuse to fire Kennedy, a nonstarter anyway. At a Sacramento Press Club luncheon, he continued to develop an apologia he gives no sign of dropping. Throughout his short political career, he bragged, whether it was plumping for an auto-spend after-school program or campaigning for his reforms, he had always surrounded himself with both Democrats and Republicans. He'd go where he wanted to go—strike up the Mamas and the Papas—with whomever he wanted to do it with.

Evenhanded as that was supposed to be, Republicans took it as defiance. It was they who had accepted his date to the recall dance (or seduced him into inviting them—whichever), they who selected him to punch out the cloddish Gov. Gray Davis. Small wonder they felt slighted.

He deepened the apologetic theme he'd introduced days before his reform package lost last November, admitting to the assembled media that he was still undergoing "on-the-job training." Memo to Steve Westly and Phil Angelides, prospective Democratic challengers both: Get that footage, replay that soundbite.

Steve Schmidt, a 35-year-old White House operative added to the Schwarzenegger team, is hailed as a political rescuer *par excellence*. Schmidt worked on President Bush's 2004 rapid-response operation aimed at the Kerry campaign, landing an administration job with Vice President Cheney as director of press relations. (Bet he's missed now.) Schmidt's new job: Get Schwarzenegger reelected next November.

So with Kennedy running the governor's office and Schmidt noodling the message, California's purple voters (blue for the coastal cities, red for the state's interior) get to observe a theoretical spectacle of bipartisanship perfected. The imperfections, however, are not far hidden.

One irritant to the governor's Republican critics: Kennedy is being paid, in addition to her $131,000 state salary, $7,500 a month from the campaign. Even more troubling, Kennedy was paid, while a member of the Public Utilities Commission, more than $100,000 from a Los Angeles law firm for work she did consulting for a real estate company engaged in a plan to sell water stored in the Mojave Desert to Southern California's Metropolitan Water District. Did someone say "alkaline"? How about "brackish"?

Republican legislators, not happy with the governor's personnel choices or the gargantuan size of his budget, have begun to work out their deals. One Inland Empire senator expects a streamlining of environmental regulations as Schwarzenegger completes the most massive road-building project since Democratic governor Pat Brown connected the state in the early sixties. It was Brown's son Jerry, upon his own inauguration in 1975, who immediately called a halt to freeway-building. Even with two Republican governors since, that's three decades without serious road-building. But Schwarzenegger, the third, hasn't found any spending cuts to off-set his fresh infrastructure plan.

Certainly, Republican activists are not easily placated. They point to a bevy of Schwarzenegger environmental appointments that seem to come from the mold of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (no relation to Susan, but a cousin of the governor's famous wife), and indeed something about subsidizing solar power seems to have gone to the governor's head.

Fueling Republican restiveness is the calculation that, since Kennedy's appointment, Schwarzenegger has committed Californians to paying $16 billion in new taxes in the form of electricity fees, water bonds, and a mobilization to end global warming in the Golden State. They wait for Schmidt to come up with a semantic escape, presumably the customary assurance that "fees" are not taxes, and they're ready to ridicule whatever he comes up with.

The state GOP convention, scheduled to convene on February 24-26 in San Jose, was expected to be determinative, as disaffected activists try to debate a package of resolutions. Among the disciplinary measures: The governor must drop his plan to increase the minimum wage, that intention already seen as a broken promise; he must appoint more Republican judges and stop naming Democrats to the bench; and he's got to cut his budget by $7.5 billion.

The hottest resolution, put up by former party chairman Mike Schroeder and threatening the withdrawal of the party's gubernatorial endorsement, would have called for the sacking of Susan Kennedy. Eleventh-hour maneuvering by McClintock, now running for lieutenant governor, has convinced the Republican right to suspend such demands.

Fire doused? Fence mended?

Those metaphors seem inapposite. As delegates leave San Jose,

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their motivational level flat, the one that sticks is that freaky photo taken right after the motorcycle smash-up. Last November's special election turned out weak numbers of Republican voters in the essential counties: Orange, San Diego, and Riverside. The Schmidt-Kennedy magic may be just enough, or not enough, all depending on how smart the Democrats are.

Assembly speaker Fabian Nuñez, a Democrat, already (and implausibly) has tried to outflank Schwarzenegger on the right by declaring the bond plan too expensive. The villainous Sen. Don Perata, meanwhile, has mounted a television campaign on behalf of his alternative transportation plan, the theme of which is public transportation (never popular in motor-happy suburbia). And the union-heavy party machinery looks poised to nominate Phil Angelides, the hack treasury secretary, over Steve Westly, the business-friendly state controller.

So The Governator might squeak back in, even with the recent discovery of an empty war chest. The betting is he'll make it, pleasing few Californians and certainly not restoring conservative governance to the Golden State. ♦

The Evil of Two Lessers

Egyptian politics boils down to Mubarak and the Islamists. BY PAUL MARSHALL

THE SHOCKWAVES of Hamas's electoral victory were felt keenly by everyone in the Middle East, not just the Israelis. In fact, few people watched the Palestinian election returns with more hope, trepidation, or calculation than the Egyptians.

Hamas was established in 1936 as an offshoot of Egypt's own major opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood, the world's oldest Islamist organization. Founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, the Brotherhood remains a central source of radicalism throughout Sunni Islam. In recent decades it has forsworn violence within Egypt, but the Brotherhood still advocates the killing of Israelis in Israel and Americans in Iraq and proclaims that it wants a new caliphate. On December 22, its head, Mohammed Mahdi Akef, echoed Iranian president Ahmadinejad, claiming that "Western democracy has attacked everyone who does not share the vision of the sons of Zion as far as the myth of the Holocaust is concerned."

The Brotherhood scored its own notable successes in Egypt's December parliamentary elections. To avoid provoking stronger government repression, it contested less than a third of the seats and still ended up winning 88 out of 454 seats. It was quite a triumph given that some of the Brotherhood's activists were killed during the campaign while others were arrested or otherwise harassed. Furthermore, since Egyptian law forbids religious parties, Brotherhood candidates could not run under a common party banner. Many observers believe the organization could have achieved a much larger victory in a more open election.

The Brotherhood's success reflects Egyptian society's increased Islamization, fueled by workers returning from stints in the Gulf and increased Saudi funding, including support for the Al-Azhar university system and other central Sunni institutions. To be sure, Egypt retains its own distinct patterns. In the south, Bob Marley is remarkably popular, and jokes proliferate—one of the latest: "What's Egypt's major export? Jokes." But that usually reliable indicator of Islamization, the number of burka-enshrouded women, has increased noticeably in Cairo, Alexandria, and other cities.

Islamists have sought to allay growing fear in Egypt's ancient Coptic Christian community, the largest religious minority in the Middle East, but the Brotherhood's election slogan, "Islam is the solution," stokes those concerns, especially in view of Hamas's victory. In addition, the Copts are still reeling after thousands of angry Muslims in October mobbed St. George Church in Alexandria, leading to four deaths, following accusations that the church had put on a blasphemous play two years before. Their fears have multiplied as Islamists use the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons as an excuse to attack not only Westerners but also Middle Eastern Christians. Meanwhile, the Hamas-led Bethlehem Council has called for the reinstatement of a *jizya* tax upon non-Muslims, while, back in Egypt, Mohamed Habib, the first deputy of the Brotherhood's supreme guide, averred that "Islamic Rule" means "that non-Muslims can have no authority over Muslims."

Egypt's liberals, such as Hisham Kassem, head of the new daily *Al Masry al Youm*, think the Brotherhood's apparent strength may be misleading, since it faces little competition. Hosni Mubarak's regime has for decades choked off the media and human rights organizations and strictly controlled civil society—thus prohibiting any grassroots organizations from challenging

Paul Marshall, who was recently in Egypt, is senior fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom and the editor of, most recently, Radical Islam's Rules: The Worldwide Spread of Extreme Shari'a Law *(Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).*

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Mubarak or the Brotherhood for political influence. Ayman Nour, the second leading vote-getter in the September presidential election, was sentenced in December to five years of hard labor on what most observers believe are trumped-up charges of forging signatures on his Ghad (Tomorrow) party's application for legal recognition. This event prompted the United States to suspend trade talks with Egypt.

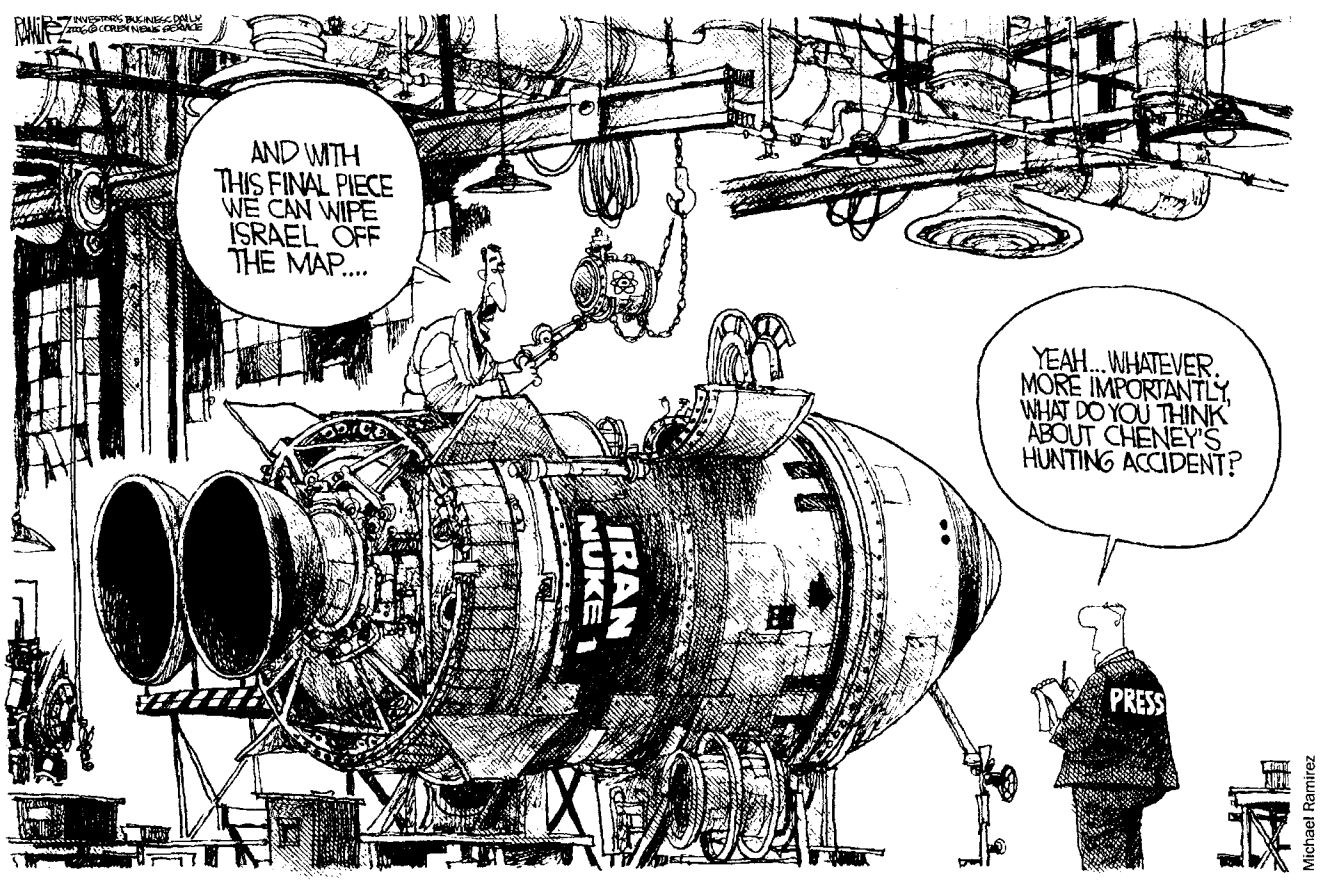
The Islamists have been resilient. In the '80s and '90s, brutal repression by state security destroyed the Brotherhood's violent splinters Gamaat Islamiya and Islamic Jihad. This prompted Gamaat's "spiritual leader" Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman to move to New Jersey, where he led the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, while Jihad's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who also fled Egypt, went on to help found al Qaeda. But the main organization has held to nonviolence, kept its head down, and patiently organized through Egypt's professional associations and networks of mosques. The Brotherhood has also, it is said, intimidated and even infiltrated Mubarak's police, who tread lightly when it comes to mosques.

Since the rest of Egypt's opposition could maintain no such network, Mubarak has effectively ensured that the short-term choice, for America and Egyptians, is him or the Islamists.

Essam el-Erian, the Brotherhood's main conduit to Western media, is affable and gregarious as he seeks to allay fears of an Islamist state but declines to answer concrete questions. Two subjects get a rise out of him. One is the role of Islamic law, *sharia*, which he told me last month "is none of America's business," even though, if enforced by a Brotherhood government, it would amount to a state-coerced caste system of religion, sect, and gender. The other is support for civil society in Egypt, which "America absolutely should not do." El-Erian's response reveals the Brotherhood's fear of robust alternatives to both it and the regime. This is something for U.S. policymakers to keep in mind.

President Bush has said that elections are only "the beginnings of democracy," but they need not even be that. Without security, a free press, free debate, a robust opinion-shaping civil society, parties that have been able to organize and mature, and, not least, a range of choices for the electorate—none of which Egypt has—elections can prove hollow.

But Egypt has far more advantages than the Palestinian territories. It has breathing space, with six years until its next presidential election. And it has a talented but hitherto smothered population that could, if given the chance, contribute mightily to the growth of free institutions. ♦



Michael Ramirez

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Revenge of the Panda Hugger

The Bush administration's China policy is hardening. BY JOHN J. TKACIK JR.

DON'T LET Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's fondness for pandas mislead you. The Bush administration's China policy has been undergoing a quiet metamorphosis, and now has a new steeliness to it.

Fifteen months ago, just two days before George W. Bush's reelection, the Chinese government's English-language mouthpiece, *China Daily*, reprinted a blast by senior diplomat Qian Qichen against a "Bush Doctrine" marked by "cocksuredness and arrogance." President Bush no doubt believed, in the last days of an extremely tight race, that Qian's comments were an attempt to influence the result of the election, or at the very least an attempt to ingratiate Beijing with John Kerry, then slightly ahead in the polls. Upon his reelection, President Bush was apparently not amused.

Since then, his China policy has evolved away from its once-cautious optimism that Beijing might possibly, somehow, be persuaded to join Washington in maintaining a rules-based world order on such issues as nonproliferation, trade, human rights, energy, environment, and health policies. The official U.S. agnosticism about where China's rise will take it—and the world—seems to be ebbing. Instead, the administration seems ready to conclude that China is not going in the right direction and that the United States must hedge its bets.

On February 3, a midlevel interagency meeting kicked off a new round of policy reviews in preparation for President Bush's upcoming meetings with Chinese president Hu Jintao, scheduled for the end of April. The meeting was hastily arranged after Taiwan president Chen Shuibian's remarks questioning the continued utility of Taiwan's official "National Unification Council." (The council was established in 1991 to consider modes of eventual unification should China ever democratize, but has not met since 1999 and is kept on life support by a token annual budget appropriation of roughly $30.)

The question of the day at the February 3 meeting was, "How does the Taiwan president's stance affect the Taiwan Strait 'status quo' in the run-up to the Hu visit?"

"Not much," according to some administration China experts. Bush's National Security Council China director Dennis Wilder, I was told, launched the discussion with a recitation of China's unhelpful behavior in the Taiwan Strait over the past year and urged a policy of "balance." To be sure, Taiwan's infant democracy has given fits to the Bush administration. But China's behavior has been egregious.

Beijing's so-called "Anti-Secession Law" last March was an open-ended declaration of a *casus belli* against Taiwan. Since 2001, Taiwan has opened direct links between China and the offshore islands of Kinmen and Matsu, licensed direct charter flights to China, relaxed investment rules, and begged for military-to-military "confidence-building measures." China has rebuffed every call from Taiwan for cross-Strait dialogue. Chinese Communist party leaders will deal only with opposition parties in Taiwan that "adhere" to the "one China principle" and oppose Taiwan's defense spending. Beijing even refused to allow a Taiwan representative to attend the December 30 funeral of Wang Daohan, Beijing's most eminent Taiwan negotiator.

In short, China has done nothing to requite Taiwan's outreach. By the time of his November visit to Beijing, President Bush had become so dismayed that he inserted a paragraph praising Taiwan's democracy into his Asia policy speech in Kyoto—a paragraph that surprised every China watcher in Washington, including those in the White House. The president, it seems, was personally trying to maintain the balance.

Separate interagency meetings in early February reviewed China's unhelpful posture on Iran's nuclear program. (China's ambassador to the United Nations, Wang Guangya, reassured Tehran that, as a "matter of principle," China would "never" support sanctions on Iran.) China continues to give cover to North Korea's nuclear intransigence and extends financial and military aid to despotic, sometimes genocidal, Asian and African regimes, from Burma and Uzbekistan to Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Further hardening administration attitudes were the xenophobic Chinese government-instigated demonstrations and violence against Japan last spring and the September incident in which China's newest Russian-built destroyer locked its fire-control radar onto a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft—over Japanese-claimed waters. In 2004, the State Department had explicitly warned that "Article 5 of the [U.S.-Japan] Mutual Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands," the territory in question. China seemed to be probing how firm the U.S.-Japan alliance is.

All of these considerations point to a new consensus within the administration that, on the China-Taiwan issue at least, Washington should rebalance its policies back in Taiwan's direction.

John J. Tkacik Jr., a retired State Department officer who served in Taipei, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou, is a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

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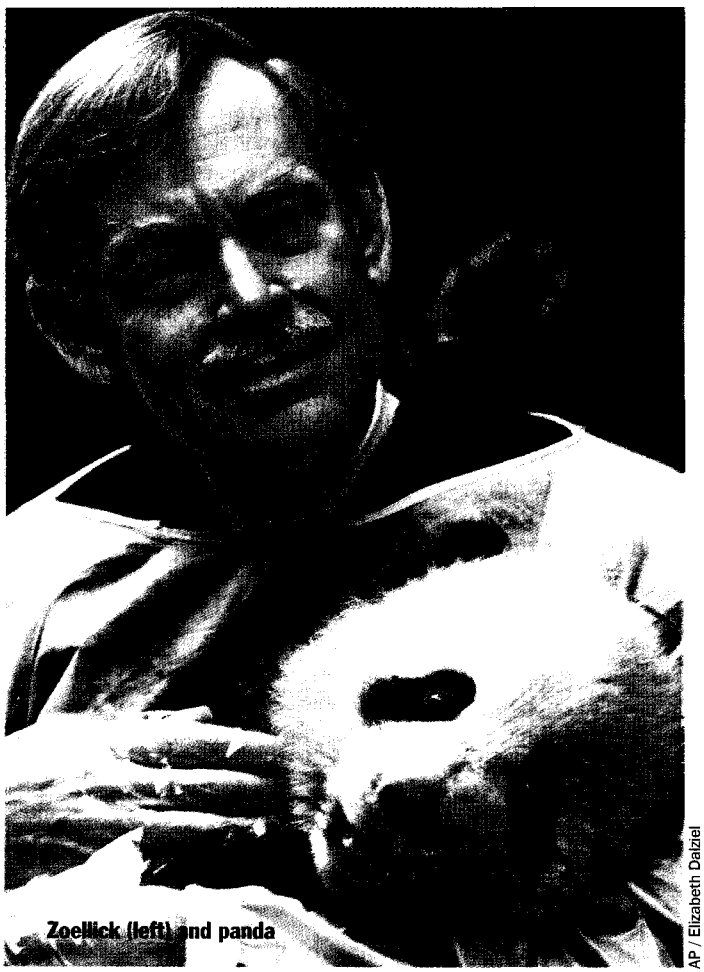
It just so happened that the Pentagon also issued its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) on February 3. A number of Pentagon China hands I spoke with that Friday evening pointed to QDR pages 29 and 30 and commented to me that it was the first time a QDR had ever mentioned a putative adversary nation by name. The passage reads as follows:

> of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages absent U.S. counter strategies.

The QDR then spends an entire page describing how "the pace and scope of China's military build-up already puts regional military balances at risk." And to top it off, one China specialist at Defense pointed to the two photos that bracket the China pages—one depicting a submarine launch of a Tomahawk cruise missile, the other showing Japanese and American F-15 fighter pilots "discussing tactics . . . before a mission." A mischievous smile on my interlocutor's face prompted me to ask, "Was that intentional?" He grinned, "Intentional or not, that's how the Chinese will see it."



Zoellick (left) and panda

AP / Elizabeth Dalziel

Bush administration attitudes toward China are hardening in other ways. In early December, Deputy Secretary Zoellick concluded the latest semi-annual round of U.S.-China dialogue with his Chinese counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo—"one of the few Chinese diplomats comfortable with departing from a prepared script," according to one administration China hand. When the dialogue concluded, however, Zoellick reportedly was left with the impression that he had done all the talking and that Dai had only listened noncommittally.

Zoellick had been particularly concerned about China's support for African dictatorships and its complete blindness to the human misery they wreak. On January 12, Zoellick got his response—a slap in the face in the form of a Chinese foreign ministry "white paper" on Africa. On the matter of human rights, civil and political rights, and genocide, China's white paper was silent. It said instead that China "respects African countries' independent choice of the road of development and supports African countries' efforts to grow stronger through unity." In other words, what African dictators do to their own people is of no concern to Beijing.

Which made it all the more puzzling when Zoellick then went out of his way to stop in Beijing after consultations in Tokyo (and the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland), and then travel on to the southwestern Chinese city of Chengdu on January 25, for the sole purpose of getting a photograph of himself "hugging a panda"—for his wife, he told reporters. The resulting images of Zoellick clad in a sterile veterinary smock and gloves, cuddling a distinctly uncomfortable baby panda, could have been seen as evidence the Bush administration had gone a bit soft in the noggin' on China. Indeed, the initial reaction among Washington China-skeptics was horror.

We have since been reassured that Zoellick indeed has a special fondness for pandas derived from his service on a World Wildlife Fund advisory council, and that Mrs. Zoellick did indeed want such a photo. Zoellick also believed that his appearance with the panda would reassure the Chinese that he is still open to a "global dialogue"—provided the Chinese start to act like they're interested.

But more likely the Bush administration is near the end of its rope with China, which now looms as a new "peer competitor," against which the United States will have to devise a new Western Pacific strategy. Unless Beijing makes some significant contribution to world peace, nonproliferation, human rights, or—not to forget—its massive trade surplus with the United States by April, President Hu should not expect a warm welcome in Washington. And Deputy Secretary Zoellick is likely to chair the welcoming committee. ♦

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2008: A Cuban Odyssey

What happens when Castro dies?

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Coral Gables

"DO WE HAVE to put tanks in the streets?" asks Raúl Castro, the new leader of the Cuban Communist party. It is just past 6 A.M. on February 14, 2008, a few hours after the death of Raúl's brother Fidel, who ruled Cuba for nearly half a century. The younger Castro, Cuba's longtime military chief, has convened a meeting of selected Politburo members to discuss the post-Fidel transition.

A lot is happening, and quickly. Riots have broken out in Guantánamo City. The U.S. Interests Section in Havana has requested permission to send a high-level American delegation to Fidel's state funeral. Raúl must make his first crucial decisions—and he's getting some wildly disparate advice.

This was the hypothetical scenario entertained earlier this month at the University of Miami by a group of Cuba experts, including several defectors, in a war-game-like simulated presentation, "Cuba Without Fidel Castro." Each expert played the role of a senior Cuban Politburo official. For well over an hour the participants, sitting at a long conference table in front of two oversized photos of the Castro brothers, squabbled about a host of concerns: the rioters, the dissidents, the *Yanquis*, the economy, and more. At least a hundred people, including a number of media, made up the audience.

According to the introduction, Fidel died from complications related to Parkinson's disease (a reasonable assumption, given recent reports). But even before his passing, "he had been unable to appear in public, or to speak intelligibly, since the previous July 26th," when he sat awkwardly through Raúl's speech at the annual commemoration of the 1953 Moncada Barracks assault.

In a sharp break with protocol, the Cuban government made no secret of Fidel's failing health. After the Moncada ceremonies, Communist apparatchiks kept Cubans abreast of their leader's condition. State-run media outlets also aired tributes to El Comandante and extolled his long career of revolutionary passion. According to our program, "these were intended to anesthetize the populace and to prepare them for the elaborately planned, month-long funeral celebrations to be held across the island. The calculation was that the chances of sudden violent outbursts once Fidel's death was announced would therefore be reduced."

Raúl Castro, Fidel's designated successor, had essentially been running the show since his brother took a turn for the worse. Now he has formally been named Cuba's president—and already he's blundered. Rather than make an official announcement of Fidel's death, Raúl orders a dirge to be broadcast around the island, thus alerting Cubans to the news. Riots quickly ensue in Guantánamo City.

"We rehearsed this situation a year ago," declares José Ramón Machado Ventura (in the person of former Cuban diplomat Alcibíades Hidalgo). A veteran Politburo member charged with organizational duties, Machado reminds his comrades of the war games of 2007, in which the Communist party, the armed forces, and other state bodies prepped for a nationwide emergency that required immediate coordination against "counterrevolutionary" elements. But Raúl (who's being played by ex-CIA officer Brian Latell) sounds a note of hesitation. "Can we refrain from large-scale arrests and detentions of dissidents and human-rights activists?" he asks. "I'm concerned that we not overreact."

This is one of the few moments when Raúl finds himself in sync with Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, the head of Cuba's national assembly since 1993. Alarcón (former Cuban intelligence analyst Domingo Amuchastegui) warns that any violent action against the dissidents will be interpreted as a sign of weakness. "We don't need to put them in jail," he argues. Just "put them under observation" and "supervise every move they make." Above all, Havana "must not convey . . . an indication of uncertainty." Pretty much all the participants assume that Cuba's democracy movement remains tiny and fractious: not even close to toppling a Raúl-led regime.

The rioters pose a pricklier dilemma. "We cannot have a Tiananmen Square in Cuba," booms Raúl. "It would be the beginning of the end of my government." State Council vice president Carlos Lage—actually Cuba researcher Eric Driggs—agrees. "It's important that we don't jump to conclusions," he says. The Guantánamo unrest could in fact be "an economic uprising" rather than "a political challenge to the government."

Cuba's new boss may not want "tanks in the streets" or "soldiers killing civilians"—but he insists on being ready in case the turmoil spills over. "Let us cautiously surround Guantánamo City with all the appropriate security and military forces," Raúl says. "No witnesses. No media." And, perhaps most important, "no foreign observers." Recall-

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ing that Fidel went to the scene of the melee during the 1994 riots along Cuba's famous Malecón boardwalk, Raúl decides he will trek to Guantánamo and "try personally to calm the rioters."

To keep a lid on news of the riots, he adds, Cuba will not tell the American forces stationed at Guantánamo Bay. Alarcón is skeptical the secret can be maintained. But Gen. Alvaro López Miera (portrayed by Jaime Suchlicki, the director of the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies) is wary of conducting any negotiations with the Bush administration, which has been nakedly hostile to the regime. "We should expect the Democrats to win in November," he counsels. (Remember, it is February 2008.) "Then maybe we can make a deal with them [over Guantánamo]."

Raúl later receives Washington's request for seats at the funeral. This prompts a fierce row between the pragmatists (Raúl and Lage) and the hardliners (Alarcón and Gen. López Miera). "We are not providing any concessions to the Americans," López Miera says bluntly. "Let them unilaterally lift the travel ban and the embargo." Alarcón says, "This administration is already a lame duck." He firmly opposes welcoming any Bush officials—"in just a few months, they'll be out"—and instead suggests inviting U.S. congressmen who have opposed the sanctions.

This insubordination gets Alarcón bounced from the meeting and stripped of his job. Raúl, we discover, favors hosting a senior U.S. contingent at the funeral, as does Lage. "I will not meet with them," Raúl says, but "let them come." Why? "We need better relations with the Americans," he explains. "This has been my position for at least the last dozen years." Raúl calls for improved ties with U.S. military officials, narcotics officials, immigration officials, and others.

He also shows his pragmatic streak when discussing Cuba's troubled economy. In his big speech announcing Fidel's death, Raúl recognizes he must give the Cuban people "hope." Raúl notes that he has occasionally touted the benefits of free market policies and even sent Cuban authorities to study economics at Western universities. But he makes one thing abundantly clear: "I will *not* be another Gorbachev."

That's just what López Miera fears. He notes that perestroika hastened the downfall of the Soviet Union. "It was corruption that destroyed the Soviet Union, not perestroika," Lage fires back. Moreover, structural economic changes "do not betray the revolution—they fulfill the revolution." Ever the hardliner, López Miera scoffs at such thinking. "Power, my friend, comes from the barrel of a gun!" he thunders. "I do not think providing economic incentives is the way to gain the youth back." Raúl finds the whole conversation "disturbing." Would Fidel, he asks, have tolerated such brazen dissent?

When the (unrehearsed) presentation concludes—at the moment Alarcón is ejected from the meeting for disputing Fidel's funeral details—the audience applauds and the participants step back out of character. "We hope that the scenario that we proposed tonight does not happen," affirms Jaime Suchlicki. A neat and tidy, Eastern Europe-style democratic transition would of course be preferable to an autocratic succession. But at this point, the latter seems far more probable.

The audience members ask questions. Will Raúl eventually liberalize the economy within an authoritarian framework, as in China? "That's a very likely model," says Suchlicki. As Brian Latell puts it, citing his own performance in the simulation, Raúl is "torn between soft and hard lines." If Cuba went the Chinese route, and Raúl offered to negotiate an end to U.S. sanctions, would America comply? "I think there would be a lot of sympathetic reaction" in Congress, predicts Latell. Once Fidel dies, will there be widespread reprisal killings among Cubans on the neighborhood level? If people see an opening, "there's a possibility that that may happen," says Eric Driggs.

Finally, and perhaps most curiously: What if Raúl dies first? Few Americans are better informed on that question than Latell, the CIA veteran and Cuba maven whose fascinating study of the Castro regime, *After Fidel*, was released last October. He believes maybe the best chance for a swift transition to Cuban democracy would come if the younger Castro passed away before his older brother. "Fidel would be very challenged to govern without Raúl," Latell says. So, if Raúl dies first, "the revolution is then in its very, *very* last chapter." ♦

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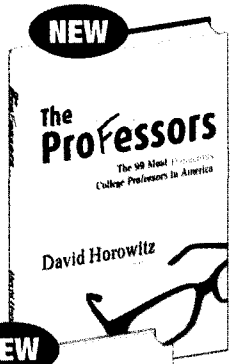

Horowitz examines a hundred leading tenured radicals, from the al-Qaeda-loving economics professor M. Shahid Alam to the U.S.-hating political science professor Howard Zinn. The results should give honest university trustees and administrators enough to do to take them well into the new century.
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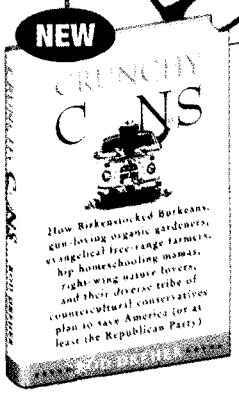

What is "crunchy conservatism?" It's a lifestyle based upon joy and the importance of family and community. As Rod Dreher of *National Review* writes: "It's about living a life mindful of and honoring the wisdom in tradition, and in so doing building a tradition to pass on to one's children."
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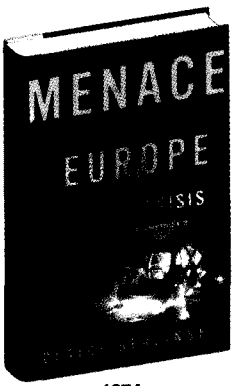

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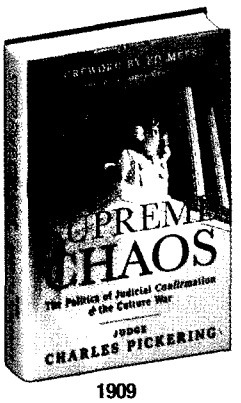

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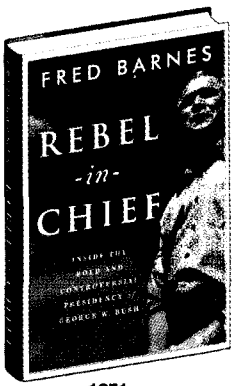

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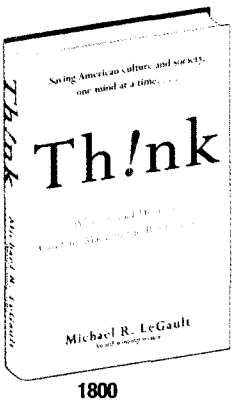

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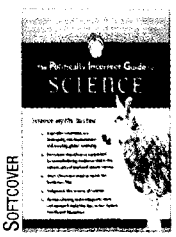

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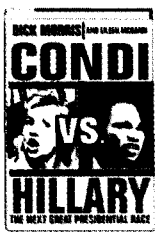

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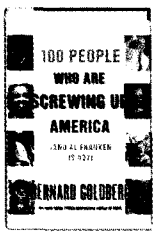

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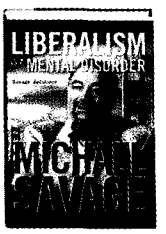

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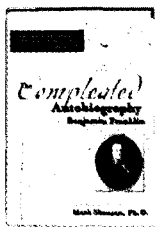

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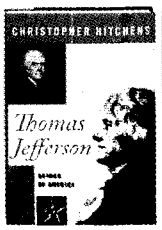

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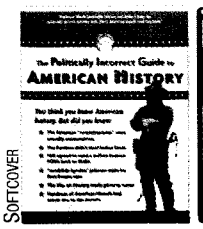

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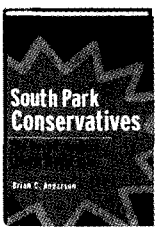

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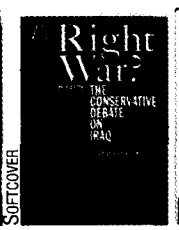

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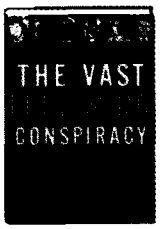

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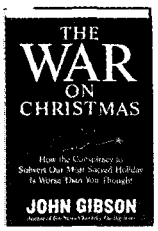

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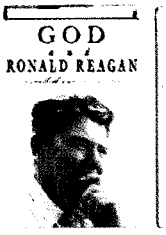

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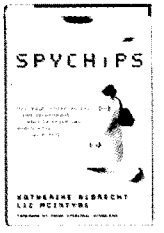

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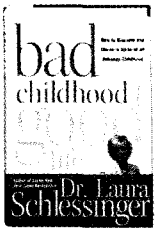

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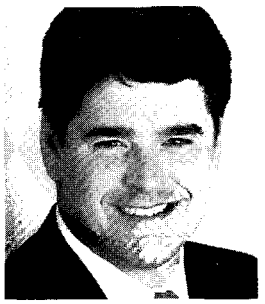

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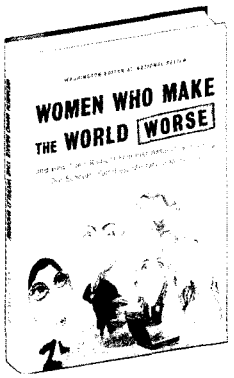

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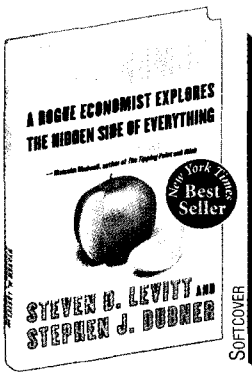

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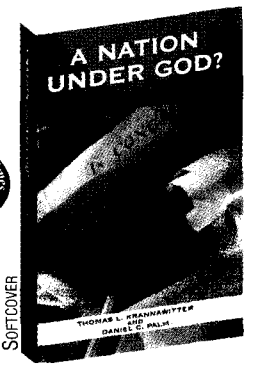

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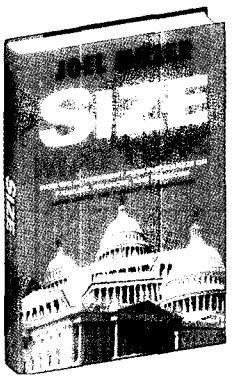

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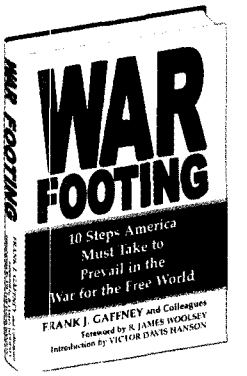

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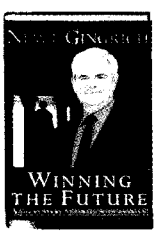

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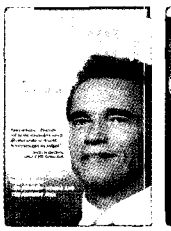

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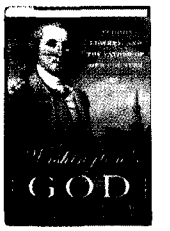

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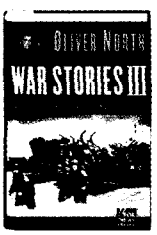

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The Man Who Would Be *le Président*

Nicolas Sarkozy's ambition to wake up France

By Christopher Caldwell

Paris

"*Plus simple! Plus vite!*" says minister of the interior Nicolas Sarkozy to the waiter bringing croissants to a receiving room outside his office at the ministry. The fellow made the mistake of heating them. That has cost time, and Sarkozy has a lot to do. Just now, he is trying to fit in both an early-morning breakfast and an interview with a foreign journalist that he hopes will take "as little time as possible." More generally, Sarkozy is running the ministry that is the nerve center of post-riot France. He is also running against prime minister Dominique de Villepin and a dozen other hopefuls to replace Jacques Chirac in the presidential elections scheduled for next year.

It is not certain that "Sarko," as he is called in the press, will win, but it is certain he will set the tone. To adapt a metaphor of the political scientist Samuel Lubell, he is the "sun" of the French political scene, generating all the light and ideas. The other candidates are like "moons," merely reflecting the light he gives off—agreeing with Sarko on this, disagreeing with him on that, and sort of agreeing with him on the other thing. According to the Socialist Manuel Valls, the successful mayor of the Paris suburb of Évry, who is sometimes presented as a left-of-center counterweight to Sarkozy, "The things he's talking about are the things the left ought to be talking about. France is losing sight of the essentials. I give him credit for raising these subjects and recognizing that politics has got to change."

Sarkozy has been a politician for most of his 51 years. He resembles Bill Clinton in that he leaves the impression that politics is the only thing he cares about really deeply; he resembles Ronald Reagan in that he seems to view politics as a battle between, on the one hand, hard-working people with on-the-ground knowledge of problems, and, on the other, vainglorious dispensers of official baloney, from academicians to columnists to "community leaders." Very few ministers of any description have visited the isolated and anomic *banlieues* that exploded in riots last fall. Sarkozy has been there dozens of times. As the minister of the interior, Sarkozy is responsible both for keeping order in the *banlieues* and for organizing France's religions, particularly the 5 million or so Muslims whom he has with difficulty shepherded into the French religion-and-state system, by means of the French Council of the Muslim Faith, which he launched two years ago.

When an 11-year-old boy was shot to death last spring while washing his father's car as a Father's Day present in the Cité des Quatre Mille housing project outside of Paris, Sarkozy promised to clean up the neighborhood "*à Kärcher*"—citing the trade name of a company that makes high-pressure hoses. While he was visiting Aulnay-sous-Bois at the height of the riots, a mother pleaded with him from a window to do something about the "low-lifes" (*racaille*) who were burning down the neighborhood. Sarkozy shouted back that he would, and used the word himself. To say that his impetuosity gets him in trouble, as the newspapers often do, is to miss the point. True, Sarkozy is a polarizer. The senior-circuit tennis player Yannick Noah, who—quite bizarrely—is one of the most quoted celebrities in France, allegedly told *Paris Match* last summer (the remark was never printed), "*S'il passe, je me casse!*" (If he gets in, I'm out of here!). But at this point Sarkozy is as popular as any politician in the country, even in parts of the *banlieues* themselves. While some kids echo the condemnations of the press ("*Vraiment, 'Kärcher', 'racaille', ça ne passe pas*," one Marseille teenager told *Le Monde*), others admire him. Everyone knows him.

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

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La rupture

One thing Sarkozy does not resemble in the slightest is a traditional French politician. "I am a man of the right," he says over breakfast, "even if I'm not a conservative in the traditional sense." This is an extraordinary admission. No presidential hopeful in decades, even in the UMP created by Jacques Chirac in the wake of De Gaulle's RPR, has ever accepted the label. Never in his political life has Jacques Chirac made a similar statement. From his time as prime minister in the mid-seventies, when he described his goal as the creation of "a labor movement *à la française*," to his recent New Year's address, in which he again attacked American-style capitalism, Chirac has taken many positions, but none of them on the "right." Since Sarkozy's profession leaves him liable to accusations in the French press that he is the favored candidate of Americans or free-marketeers, he is anxious to spell out exactly what he means by a "temperament of the right." It is something he has obviously thought about a lot. "First, the primacy of work; second, the need to compensate personal merit and effort; third, respect for the rules, and for authority; fourth, the belief that democracy does not mean weakness; fifth, values; sixth, . . . I'm persuaded that, before sharing, you have to create wealth. I don't like egalitarianism."

Out of this value system come plans for everything. Between stints at the interior ministry, Sarkozy also spent time as minister of finance. He intends to shrink the state, reform the profligate, bureaucratic, and job-killing "French social model," cut taxes, promote ethnic harmony (through the controversial expedient of affirmative action), normalize Islam in French society, and shore up France's alliance with the United States. These plans amount to what supporters and detractors call *la rupture*. As Sarkozy told a roomful of journalists at UMP headquarters in January: "You can't run France on the ideas of 30 years ago." This may sound old hat. Since 1974, all French presidential elections have been run on the theme of "change."

But when Sarkozy's advisers and supporters and political allies speak of *la rupture*, they are thinking of something different and bigger—a recognition of past failures that is the precondition of renewed grandeur, along the lines of De Gaulle's break with the government that surrendered to Nazi Germany in 1940. "The *rupture* is with the philosophy of French exceptionalism," says Sarkozy's adviser, the National Assembly member Patrick Dévédjian. By this he means the common French idea that France can escape the constraints of other countries because its people and its institutions are so much more sophisticated. Naturally, this is a position that is easy to attack. It involves a swallowing of pride, and Sarkozy's rival Villepin has lost no opportunity to remind his listeners that ruptures are often bloody.

Immigrants

Much of Sarkozy's work involves the way France has changed (and must change further still) in the face of mass immigration, something he has a closer perspective on than most. His father was a Hungarian nobleman who fled west toward the end of World War II and settled in Paris. His mother's father immigrated from Salonika. They were cultivated people—the father was a high-living anti-Communist, the mother put herself through law school after their divorce. Sarkozy did not wind up in government the way cultivated Frenchmen often do—through the elite *grandes écoles*. He became a lawyer, got involved in politics in the rich suburb of Neuilly, and managed to outflank the crafty RPR politician Charles Pasqua to get himself elected mayor at the age of 28.

This was a coup that brought him to the attention of two great rivals in the party: Jacques Chirac and Édouard Balladur. The latter, as prime minister, made Sarkozy minister of the budget in the early 1990s, and Sarkozy backed him against Chirac for president in 1995. Sarkozy bet wrong. Since then, he has had to fight against Chirac's machinations to retain his position in the party. In 2002, Chirac moved him from the ministry of the interior to the ministry of finance, a portfolio that—given France's ballooning deficit—is something of a ticking bomb for the person who holds it. When Sarkozy survived and managed to take control of the UMP, Chirac issued a declaration that no one could be both party leader and minister simultaneously. To the surprise of many, Sarkozy opted for the party and turned it into a vehicle for promoting his political fortunes.

His time in the wilderness lasted only a few months. It ended when France, the intellectual engine of European integration for half a century, became the first country to reject the proposed European constitution in a referendum last May. Chirac had invested his political credibility in a "Yes" vote. Worse, the sound drubbing his side received was attributed in part to Chirac's own incompetence in appealing to the nation in a pair of televised appearances. Compelled to reshuffle his cabinet, Chirac made Villepin prime minister and invited Sarkozy back to become minister of state for the interior, a position that gave him responsibility for public order on the eve of the Paris riots.

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A cop or a hope?

France now is going through a crisis of national self-confidence, somewhat akin to what Americans went through in the late 1970s. Every day seems to bring a disorienting new factoid or outrage. In December, in Étampes, for instance, a teacher was stabbed in class. Nine thousand cars were burned in 2005 *before* the riots of last fall. But the two weeks of burned cars, smashed buildings, and menacing hip-hop gestures in October and November were particularly disorienting. Unlike the riots of 1968, the uprising in the suburbs produced no leaders, no social movement, no body of thinking that outside observers could either accept or deplore, and no demands that could be productively answered. Three months after the events, there was still no consensus in French public opinion over what the riots were even about. Some said that Islam played a central role in the events, others that it played none at all. One former minister even credibly asserted that the involvement of North African Arabs in the events was minimal, and that the lion's share of the destruction was carried out by newer immigrants from elsewhere.

The lack of a ready-made agenda in addressing the riots—or even of a clear diagnosis—was less of a challenge for Sarkozy than it would have been for other politicians. "I speak for the people who live *real* life, not for those who live virtual life," he says over breakfast. "What interests me is not to describe injustices, but to combat them." That is one reason his popularity rose in the course of the riots, even though keeping public order is, in theory, his job, and despite an onslaught of criticism in the press. Another reason was the extraordinary physical courage Sarkozy has shown over the years, which matters a great deal wherever television, violence, and democratic politics meet. In 1993, when a hostage-taker with a bomb took over a nursery school in Neuilly, Sarkozy walked into the building and negotiated the release of several schoolchildren face-to-face with the criminal.

Although not as hard during the riots as the "*Kärcher*"- and "*racaille*"-filled press reports would imply, Sarkozy was tough, and he has been tough ever since. He has not been cowed or apologetic before suggestions that his tough stance might win him votes from the far-right National Front. "I always try to get as many votes as possible," he says at the ministry of the interior, "whether it's from the FN or anywhere else." (A poll in *Valeurs Actuelles* even showed him doing better among Le Pen supporters than Le Pen.) He defended the philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, who was attacked as a "deviant" and a "reactionary" in politically correct circles after saying of the rioters in an interview that "there are people in France who hate France as a republic." And since the turn of the year Sarkozy has courted the wrath of immigrant lobbies. It has long been his view (he mentioned it in his New Year's address to the press) that family reunification rules were being abused to maximize immigration. Last month, Sarkozy suggested a reform of the immigration laws—not to diminish immigration but to orient it around the skills that France needs. This illustrates Dévédjian's claim that Sarkozy seeks to break with the tradition of French exceptionalism. "In the great democracies," Sarkozy said in January, "immigration is usually considered a source of dynamism and opportunity."

Here Sarkozy's ideology has been highly syncretic. He has won the standing to talk like a hard man of the right because a lot of his program comes from the soft-hearted left. When Sarkozy says, "I want to put in place a policy that affects these neighborhoods directly," he is talking about two things. The first is affirmative action, or "positive discrimination," as it is called in France. It can be argued that France needs such measures desperately, that the inscrutability of the riots (and of the hundreds of anti-Semitic incidents earlier this decade) arose from the lack of ghetto interlocutors who had one foot firmly in the wider French society.

But affirmative action is a radical departure for France, where unequal treatment of citizens is viewed as an attack on core values of the republic. Both Villepin and Chirac have opposed it, as have many on the left. Sarkozy shows a bit of the naiveté of, say, Hubert Humphrey in 1964 when he implies the program would be only temporary. "Positive discrimination implies a limitation in time," he says. "Once the injustice is taken care of, there's no need to envision any specific discrimination." How long would the program last, then? Twenty years? "No, twenty years is too long."

The second leg of his soft approach is to bring Islam into the mainstream of French life. Most people in France pay lip service to this idea, but Sarkozy acts on it. A great deal of the work Sarkozy has done with the two-year-old French Council of the Muslim Faith involves getting non-pork dishes into school cafeterias and arranging for Muslim burials to be allowed in municipal cemeteries.

French people, to put it mildly, are worried about Islam. They notice yawning gaps between Muslim and non-Muslim sentiment. For instance, according to a poll released by the Center for Political Research (Cevipof) in December, Muslim French are almost twice as likely as others (39 percent to 21 percent) to disapprove of homosexuality. The French fret, too, that many of the institutions of French Islam are supported by foreign govern-

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ments and note that Sarkozy's CFCM has for periods been under the domination of the hard-line Union of Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF). Sarkozy's approach is to blow past these worries, to face up to the fact that Islam is in France to stay, and to focus on making coexistence tolerable to all parties. His supporters say that without the CFCM, the UOIF could have drifted out of the mainstream altogether. "I judge by my own district," says Patrick Dévédjian of Sarkozy. "The young, marginalized kids—yes, they think of him as just a cop. But for the 90 percent who want to integrate into French life, he's a real source of hope."

Not working

Unemployment has been in double digits in France for most of the past two decades. But it is at 20 percent for youth, and 40 percent for youth in the suburbs. This is another of those areas where Sarkozy intends to break with French exceptionalism. His favorite public-policy thinkers—the ones whose books he recommends to visitors—are Alain Minc and Nicolas Baverez. Both have focused on the country's giant problems: first, a deficit that has swollen to unmanageable levels; and, second, France's still-incomplete reconciliation to the global economy. "The problem with France," Sarkozy said in a January speech, "is not that we work too much but that we don't work enough." He clearly believes the 35-hour work week, won by a Socialist government in the late 1990s, is damaging France's competitiveness, although this is still too treasured an "entitlement" to be attacked frontally, or by name—especially after the alarming successes scored by anti–free market rhetoric in last spring's referendum on Europe.

The free market, in fact, is the most likely means by which Sarkozy could get "demagogued" out of the presidency for which he appears destined. In the heat of an election campaign it is easy for a political establishment to pick apart the "heartlessness" of one who would reform the welfare state. In Germany, Angela Merkel—who held a double-digit lead before last fall's campaign started and today has the highest poll numbers ever recorded for a German postwar leader—came within a hair's breadth of losing to Gerhard Schröder last September when her socialist opponents began dissecting her flat-tax plans. (This is a reading that Sarkozy disputes. "No," he says. "The reason for that is that M. Schröder also had an important reform package himself.")

The other potential pitfall is foreign policy. Sarkozy has often deviated sharply from the positions of Chirac. Some of these deviations will help him. He opposed Turkish entry into the European Union. He takes terrorism more seriously than Chirac does: He thinks the recent spate of books in France that deal with barbarism is due to people's worries about terrorism, "because terrorism is nothing but barbarism." He supports Israel more forthrightly than do most French politicians, although he shares their insistence that peace rests on the establishment of a Palestinian state. "I support Israel because it's the right thing to do," he says. "Israel is a democracy, Israel is a francophone country, and Israel came into being after the Holocaust. That's three good reasons." Although today, Sarkozy speaks of "reservations" he had about the U.S. intervention in Iraq, he was known to be unhappy at the time with the style in which Chirac and Villepin opposed it.

Certainly, Villepin will have the advantage in foreign policy when the election comes, whether that is next year or earlier. After suffering what the press euphemistically calls a "cerebral accident" last September, Chirac has been slow to regain his form. In a January speech in Tulle, in his old electoral district of Corrèze, he made a dozen bumbles where he substituted similar words for words that were written in his speech ("No one is extended" for "No one is astounded," that sort of thing).

The presidential election, whenever it happens, is difficult to game out, and full of paradoxes. It's a two-round election, like elections in Louisiana, where the top two finishers in a first round compete head-to-head in a runoff. Everyone expected Villepin—distant from the people, never elected to office, without his finger on the pulse, etc.—to stumble when he started to campaign. But everyone has thus far been wrong. Villepin has shown himself a gifted politician, lifting some of Sarkozy's more attractive programs and running a well-controlled campaign. That does not solve Villepin's big problem—he is Chirac's designated heir at a time when an heir to Chirac is the last thing the French people want.

Unfortunately for Sarkozy, the second-to-last thing the French people want is a real reformer. Villepin has attacked French "*déclinologues*," a term cleverly intended to present any attempt to diagnose and fix France's problems as somehow anti-French. If Villepin and Sarkozy should both make it to the second round—a real possibility, if the left is as fragmented as it was in 2002 and if Sarkozy peels votes away from the far right—Villepin will win, since his role in obstructing the war on Iraq will gain him the votes of the left. If there is a unified left, and a strong socialist candidate—such as the social-conservative member of parliament Ségolène Royal—then the odds are even for Sarkozy. Anything can happen.

Or almost anything. One thing that appears highly unlikely is the eclipse of Sarkozy as the dominant and defining French politician of his generation. ♦

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Climate of Uncertainty

Why global warming is back in the headlines

By Steven F. Hayward

Climate change is heating up again in American politics, the result of an orchestrated campaign to push the issue to the forefront. Al Gore is hitting the road with his animated computer slide show and has a documentary movie coming out. Climate action advocates skillfully exploited the Bush administration's clumsy moves to limit the public statements of NASA's chief climate scientist, Dr. James Hansen, and landed panicky stories about climate "tipping points" and scientific censorship on the front pages of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. The real head-turner, however, was the recent launch of the Evangelical Climate Initiative, in which nearly 100 evangelical leaders signed on to the environmentalist party line. Some are the same liberal evangelicals who tub-thumped for the nuclear freeze during the Reagan years, but some are conservative evangelicals important to Bush's red-state base, such as Rick (*The Purpose Driven Life*) Warren. When the eco-apocalypse meets the New Testament apocalypse, you know *something* is up. That something is a sense of political desperation among climate change alarmists, as the world slowly turns against them.

If there is any subject more certain than the federal budget process to bring on eye-glaze, it is global warming and the drearily repetitive argument about the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The issue combines the worst of wonky numerology (parts per million of various gases, complex computer models, opaque cost-benefit analyses), an alphabet soup of unctuous international bureaucracies (IPCC, UNFCCC, SRES, TAR, USGCRP, etc., etc.), and the incessant braying of interest groups. No wonder Al Gore loves it so much. Yet the issue, seemingly stuck in a rut for almost two decades, is starting to shake loose and head in new directions.

How do you go about sorting out sense from nonsense? Very few people who follow closely the subject of climate change argue that there's nothing to it. There is unanimity that the planet has warmed by about 1 degree over the last century. Just about everyone agrees that the growth of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels cannot continue forever. That's where the agreement ends. The range of possible temperature increase over the next century is fairly wide in the official forecasts, from 1.4 degrees Celsius on the low side, which might not be difficult to cope with, to 5.8 degrees Celsius on the high side, which would mean major environmental problems for the planet. How probable is any point along the distribution? For reasons having to do with the cascading statistical uncertainties of the thousands of variables in computer climate models, we can't assign a probability to any narrower range of temperature forecasts, though very clever people are trying.

So for most of the last decade we have been playing a back and forth game with signs and wonders that are offered as confirmation that catastrophic global warming is well under way. But these tend to be as controversial as the computer climate models. As good as our measurement techniques are, there is still large disagreement about basic facts. Are the polar ice caps melting or growing thicker? Both, depending on what data set you consult. Is the last decade the hottest in 2,000 years? You need a flak jacket to survive the crossfire on this one. Can variance in solar radiation account for some or most of the warming we've experienced to date? Better put on a second flak jacket. Do clouds warm or cool the planet? Both, and understanding the balance between their conflicting effects remains a huge problem for climate models. Are ocean temperatures rising and Gulf Stream currents changing? Probably, but we need better data to be sure. Will hurricanes get worse? Get a helmet to go with your flak jacket, and put FEMA on speed-dial. Aren't scientists overwhelmingly in agreement that the science is "settled"? Well, yes, except for the hundreds of scientists who've

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signed various statements and resolutions saying we lack adequate mastery of the subject.

At this point even most people with a scientific background throw up their hands and say, "Call me back in 50 years if I need to turn up my air conditioning." It does no good, as global warming skeptics and many official climate science reports often do, to call for reducing "uncertainty" in climate science. The uncertainties of climate change have less to do with the enormous complexity of the linkages of the various earth sciences comprising the issue, and more to do with the stakes involved. With near-term global greenhouse gas suppression costs called for at Kyoto calculated in the multiple trillions of dollars ($37 trillion according to one widely accepted estimate), political considerations magnify the importance of nailing down uncertainties beyond the ability of science to do so. In fact, with a subject as sprawling as climate change, the disciplinary diversity of science is going to magnify rather than narrow uncertainties.

Ultimately, policymakers will have to exercise their best judgment rather than wait for oracular scientific conclusiveness, which will never come. Notwithstanding the relentless drumbeat of studies offered as proof of onrushing catastrophe, policymakers are rightly wary of handing over the keys of the economy to the very same people who brought us the population bomb that turned out to be a wet firecracker, predicted imminent resource scarcity, which also fizzled, and even, in the 1970s, hyperventilated that our greatest climate risk was a new ice age. (The ice age scare was not the tiny sideshow climate action advocates today try to claim that it was; the EPA in the early 1970s thought one reason to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions was that "aerosols" like SO_2 were reflecting too much sunlight and increasing the risk of cooling the planet.) The suspicion of hidden agendas is buttressed by the default position of the most vocal environmentalists and the front-page-seeking reporters who cover the climate beat: They greet with complete credulity the most extreme forecasts and portents, whether it is melting ice, boiling oceans, or expiring frogs.

This is more than just a problem of having cried wolf too often; there seems to have been little introspection or second thoughts among environmentalists about why their Malthusian alarms rang false in the past. Given their track record, why should anyone believe that *this time* the alarmists have it right? There has been only grudging acceptance among environmentalists of the positive role of economic growth, the resiliency of human beings, and the dynamic world human ingenuity creates. It might be possible to grant more credibility to the alarmists if there were signs that their current analysis incorporates fundamental corrections of their previous neo-Malthusian frameworks. The recently released U.N. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment appears to go some of the way toward this kind of reappraisal, but the 12-volume (so far), 3,000-page report, by its very length, defends itself against the risk of being read or comprehended.

This brings us to the official effort to assess climate change for the purposes of making policy: the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In the abstract the IPCC deserves it due. The effort to get to the bottom of climate change may be the largest scientific inquiry in human history. It requires the coordination of thousands of specialists, the development of whole new scientific techniques, and the refinement of elaborate computer models that need weeks to run on the world's most powerful supercomputers. Even discounting for the inherent weaknesses of computer models, this kind of sustained effort is likely to generate valuable knowledge in the fullness of time. Producing a coherent report every few years that combines all of this work is an extraordinary feat. The IPCC is currently well into the process of producing its Fourth Assessment Report, due out next year.

The problem with the IPCC process, however, is that the scientists and experts participating in each iteration have become increasingly self-selected toward those with a taste for climate alarmism. Past reports, especially the Second Assessment Report in 1995, were badly politicized by U.N. bureaucrats, misrepresenting the "consensus" the report actually contained. Rumors abound of internal political pressures to "sex up" the reports to make the case for the economically ruinous Kyoto agreement more compelling. Honest skeptics qualified to participate have found the consensus-oriented IPCC process too frustrating and have dropped out. For example, Richard Lindzen, a participant and chapter author in the Third Assessment Report in 2001, is not participating in the next round. More and more, the IPCC is becoming an echo chamber for one point of view, and is closed to honest criticism from the outside. They have not merely rejected criticism; in the fashion of environmental activists, they have demonized their reasonable critics.

The case of David Henderson and Ian Castles is a good example. Henderson, the former chief economist of the OECD, and Castles, a highly regarded Australian economist, noticed three years ago a serious methodological anomaly in the IPCC's 100-year greenhouse gas emission forecasts, which are the primary input for the computer climate models. Henderson and Castles made a compelling argument that the forecasts were unrealistically high. Everyone recalls the first day of computer science class: garbage in, garbage out. If future greenhouse gas emissions

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are badly overestimated, then even a perfect computer climate model will spit out a false temperature prediction. If Henderson and Castles are right, it means we may have more time to address even the most alarmist global warming forecasts. Since Henderson and Castles opened the debate, the IPCC's emissions forecasts have been subject to withering criticism from dozens of other reputable economists, including from a number of climate alarmists who, to their credit, argue that this crucial question should be got right.

The IPCC's reaction to Henderson and Castles was startling. The panel issued a vituperative press release blasting the two men for peddling "disinformation." A few scientists and economists connected with the IPCC had the decency to say publicly that the press release was a regrettable error. But it is typical of the increasingly arrogant IPCC leadership. The IPCC's chairman, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, compared Danish eco-skeptic Bjorn Lomborg to Hitler because of Lomborg's wholly sensible and well-founded calculation that near-term emissions reductions make no economic sense. "What is the difference between Lomborg's view of humanity and Hitler's?" Pachauri told a Danish newspaper in 2004. "If you were to accept Lomborg's way of thinking, then maybe what Hitler did was the right thing." It is hard to have much confidence in an organization whose chairman can say this and keep his job. (The *reductio ad Hitlerum* is contagious: Two weeks ago NASA's James Hansen compared having a Bush political appointee listen in on his media phone calls—an obnoxious but routine practice in the federal government—to Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, eliciting rapturous applause from an audience in New York. And Hansen wonders why people call him an alarmist.)

Moreover, despite the cascade of criticism of the IPCC's emissions forecasts, the same set of forecasts will be used in the next round of climate models, assuring a defective result. The IPCC says it would take too long to do a fresh set of forecasts. Despite the IPCC's wall of resistance, the consensus is coming around to the Castles and Henderson view that the IPCC has done a poor job of handling this important aspect of the issue. *Nature* magazine, normally aligned with the alarmists, editorialized in January that the IPCC's "macroeconomic assumptions . . . ought really to be discarded as wishful thinking," and criticized the IPCC for not incorporating "economists' latest thinking" in their next assessment.

Given its size and the imperatives of bureaucracy, the IPCC monopoly on official climate science is probably unreformable. What it needs is competition—the equivalent of the famous "Team B" of Sovietologists at the CIA in the 1970s. A robust independent effort at assessing climate science would have the tonic effect of making the IPCC behave with more circumspection in its methodology and judgment. In the absence of a full-fledged Team B effort, governments ought to require greater involvement of their finance ministries. It is astonishing how aloof most government finance ministries are to the entire IPCC and Kyoto process; in most European governments (and in the U.S. government, too), the whole mess is left to environment departments and foreign ministries, assuring a high level of economic naiveté.

There is some movement toward broadening the climate portfolio and introducing some competitive analysis, especially in Britain, which has set for itself the most ambitious emissions cuts of any nation, aiming for a 60 percent reduction by the year 2050. Her Majesty's Treasury has embarked on a full-scale review of the economics of climate change science and policy, coincidentally right after a bipartisan select committee of the House of Lords issued a blistering report on the deficiencies of economic analysis of the issue.

This is merely one sign of the crackup of the global climate change caucus. Slowly, most governments are coming around to what has been President George W. Bush's position on the matter since taking office in 2001: The Kyoto Protocol is a nonstarter. With just a few years to go before the end of the initial target date of Kyoto, almost no nation is on course to meet its targets (except those Eastern European nations who saw emissions reductions from shuttering defunct state-owned industries after the Soviet Union dissolved, and even there the trend is again upward). Even though Britain is the one European nation that has come closest to fulfilling its Kyoto commitment, ironically it is Prime Minister Tony Blair's acknowledgment that the climate change emperor isn't wearing any clothes that has brought new candor to international discussion of the issue.

The first sign of this new realism became evident at last July's G-8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, which Blair hosted. Many observers expected that President Bush would come under renewed pressure to relent in his opposition to Kyoto's binding emissions caps. However, the statement issued at the G-8 summit appeared to be a vindication of Bush's perspective. One portion of the G-8 communiqué adopted the exact language the Bush administration has been using since 2001: "While uncertainties remain in our understanding of climate science, we know enough to act now to put ourselves on a path to slow and, as the science justifies, stop and then reverse the growth of greenhouse gases." The communiqué's policy guidance placed greater emphasis than previous statements on economic growth, technological innovation, and—above all—*adaptation* to climate change. "U.S. Appears to Win Global

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Warming Debate" was the dismayed Associated Press headline from Gleneagles.

Then in a September 15 appearance at former President Bill Clinton's "Global Initiative" conference in New York, Blair dropped a bombshell: "I would say probably I'm changing my thinking about this in the past two or three years. I think if we are going to get action on this, we have got to start from the brutal honesty about the politics of how we deal with it. The truth is no country is going to cut its growth or consumption substantially in the light of a long-term environmental problem." Blair added: "To be honest, I don't think people are going, at least in the short term, going to start negotiating another major treaty like Kyoto."

This was not a one-off comment from Blair, but reflected his serious reconsideration of the state of play, as his follow-up comments made clear. "It's easy to take frustrations out on the Bush administration," Blair wrote in the *Observer* in October, "but people forget that the Senate voted 95-0 against Kyoto when Bill Clinton was in the White House. We have to understand as well that, even if the U.S. did sign up to Kyoto, it wouldn't affect the huge growth in energy consumption we will see in India and China." While not abandoning the idea of a successor treaty with "targets and timetables," Blair shifted his emphasis to accelerating technological development and technology transfer to the developing world.

Blair was soon seconded by his science adviser David King (who had previously said that climate change was a larger world threat than terrorism), who said, "I don't think any country is going to manage a process where the suspicion is that they will need to reduce their GDP growth." And Blair's environment minister, Margaret Beckett, followed with comments to the effect that industrialized countries that insist on binding global emissions targets would be considered "the new imperialists" by developing nations: "People would never engage in dialogue if they thought the outcome was preconceived and could hamper their development. . . . Such an approach would be utterly destructive to any kind of agreement." Beckett suggested voluntary targets, "informal mechanisms," and industry-specific emissions programs would be a more suitable way to go forward after Kyoto's initial commitment period expires in 2012.

As Blair has one of the keenest political noses for future trends and possibilities, his perspectives are worth giving considerable weight. Environmentalists in Britain were furious. The executive director of Friends of the Earth said Blair's comments were "extremely retrograde and dangerous. . . . It's seismic in climate change politics and threatens 15 years' worth of negotiations." Greenpeace dumped several tons of coal near 10 Downing Street. A spokesman for the World Wildlife Fund delivered the vilest insult imaginable in British politics: "The actual negotiating position of the prime minister becomes daily less discernible from that of U.S. president George W. Bush."

The final game-changer was Bush's successful initiative to launch the Asia-Pacific Partnership (APP) last summer. The APP consists of the United States, China, India, Japan, Australia, and South Korea, which together account for about half of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions. As such the APP represents an alternative to the U.N. process that gave us Kyoto, and may one day put the U.N. climate change process out of business. As the new year began, the APP held its first meeting in Sydney, Australia, and began to articulate an alternative strategy to the Kyoto approach. The APP emphasizes as its first priority economic development and the eradication of poverty. It also struck notes of realism about energy use, observing that "fossil fuels underpin our economies, and will be an enduring reality for our lifetimes and beyond." The partnership members pledged more resources for advanced energy research, but also for work on making current fossil-fuel energy cleaner. The real game afoot behind the APP is probably to accelerate the transfer of advanced technology to India and China, whose greenhouse gas emissions are expected to soar in the coming years if they use current fossil fuel energy technology.

These developments suggest that however more convincing the scientific case for serious global warming may become, most world leaders are recognizing that near-term emissions reductions aren't a sensible way to begin moving to a post-carbon energy future. Twenty or thirty years from now we are likely to look back on the Kyoto Protocol as the climate-policy equivalent of the discredited wage and price controls of the 1970s, even as the climate prediction models themselves may come to resemble the elaborate Keynesian models that were supposed to enable us to fine-tune the economy with perfect precision. The Keynesian understanding of the economy was not wholly wrong, but fell far short of the mastery of detail its backers claimed. Climate alarmists like to warn us of the danger of severe climate "surprises" that may come our way. But if we're really taken by surprise, what does it tell us about the limitations of their models?

Is there—to extend the analogy—a "supply-side" analogy for climate policy? Amazingly enough, a hot topic among environmental economists is the positive relationship between economic growth—the central pillar of Bush's climate strategy—and environmental improvement. There is even a conceptual curve for it, known as the "Environmental Kuznets Curve," that can be scribbled on a napkin. It looks just like the Laffer Curve. ♦

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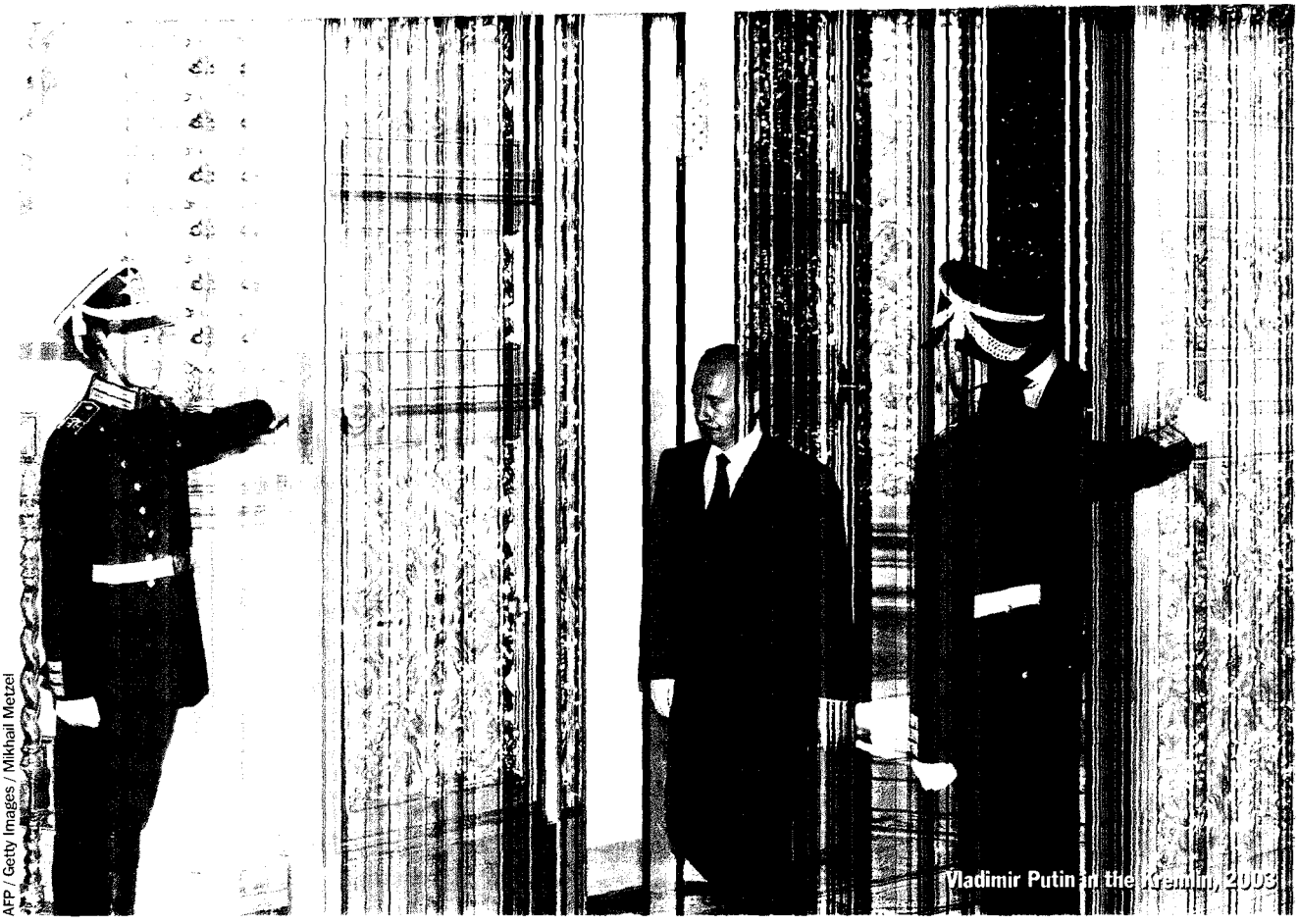

AFP / Getty Images / Mikhail Metzel

Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin, 2003

Putin on the Ritz

The president is the power in Russia By Michael McFaul

For decades, Moscow bureau chief for the *Washington Post* was a coveted assignment, occupied by some of the paper's superstar reporters.

The Soviet era was fascinating, and it was Page One news during the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union offered riveting drama, and the creation of a new political and economic system in Russia throughout the 1990s also provided great stories, colorful personalities, tough analytical puzzles, and bursts of high-octane politics—be it the shelling of the parliament in 1993, the invasion of Chechnya in 1994, Boris Yeltsin's difficult reelection in 1996, or the financial meltdown in 1998. It is not surprising that *Post* correspondents have written some of the best books that we have in English on Soviet and Russian politics.

Kremlin Rising
Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution
by Peter Baker and Susan Glasser
Scribner, 464 pp., $27.50

Against this awesome legacy, I felt sorry for Peter Baker and Susan Glasser when I first met them, in the summer of 2000, as they prepared to assume their positions as Post bureau chiefs for the next four years. By then, all the drama in Russia seemed over. The Russian economy had recovered splendidly from the 1998 crash to record serious economic growth in the last two years before Baker and Glasser arrived. This economic growth is good for Russians, but less so for reporters: Chronicling the massive expansion of IKEA is a great story once, but does not make it into the paper if you try to write about it a second time.

Politics in Russia also seemed stable and boring. At the time, Russia's new president, Vladimir Putin, was trying hard to distance himself from his former boss, Boris Yeltsin. The conventional wisdom, however, was that Putin represented continuity with the Yeltsin era, not change. Putin was a political novice with no independent political base. Therefore, the analysts predicted, he would be constrained by the complicated weave of relations between the state and the oligarchs, who had so dominated Russian politics in the final years of Yeltsin's rule.

Michael McFaul, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and professor of political science at Stanford, is most recently the author (with Nikolai Petrov and Andrey Ryabov) of Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Postcommunist Political Reform.

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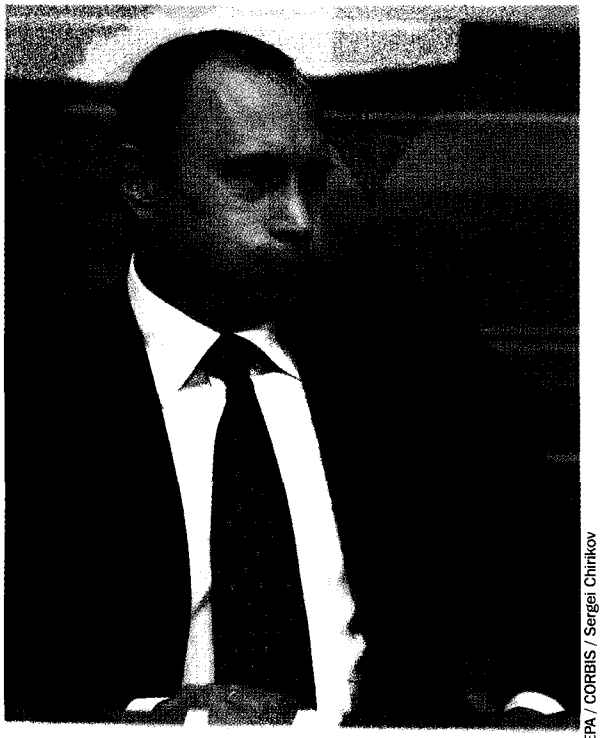

EPA / CORBIS / Sergei Chirikov

Annual press conference, 2006

How boring is that? About what would these newcomers write? When would they ever get on Page One? I pitied them.

Moreover, upon taking this assignment, Glasser and Baker knew next to nothing about Russia, or the old (and tired) debates between optimists and pessimists about its future. They were truly clean slates, and this seemed to me, on first encounter, to be a real disadvantage, which would compel them to wander about Russia, both literally and figuratively, writing about the same cliché topics that all new foreign correspondents seem to write about soon after arrival in Moscow: crime and corruption, the wealth of Moscow, the apathy of the Russian people, and so on.

I could not have been more wrong about both Russia and Baker and Glasser. With serious hiccups such as the arrest of billionaire Mikhail Khodorkovsky and the confiscation of his assets, the economic story has continued along much the same trajectory that it was on when Glasser and Baker first arrived. But the political story has turned out to be anything but muddling through.

Instead, as brilliantly chronicled and meticulously documented in *Kremlin Rising*, the drift towards authoritarian rule has emerged as the central drama in Russia over the last several years. And rather than being an impediment to reporting, Glasser and Baker's fresh perspective on this story gives the book life as a narrative, but also credibility as an account. Baker and Glasser did not go to Russia chomping at the bit to write about growing autocracy. Instead, growing autocracy became the overwhelming story that, as honest journalists, they had to cover. For a comprehensive understanding of Putin's Russia, this is our best account to date.

Putin's struggle to tame NTV, Russia's largest independent television company at the time, presented Baker and Glasser with their first big reporting challenge. The details of the story were complicated, involving complex ownership structures, anachronistic legal statutes and interpretations, and a victim—Vladimir Gusinsky—who was not the next Andrei Sakharov but a wealthy businessman. The essence of the story, however, was very straightforward: Gusinsky's television station (as well as his newspaper and weekly magazine) broadcast news and promoted opinions that the Kremlin did not like, so the Kremlin and its allies deployed the legal system to chase him out of the country and force new, Kremlin-friendly owners to take control.

First, in their reporting, and now in their book, Baker and Glasser deftly manage to capture the complexity of the fight between Gusinsky and the Kremlin without letting the details dilute the true meaning of this episode and its negative implications for democracy in Russia. Their chapter on NTV's demise combines excellent reporting with fair and nuanced interpretation. While avoiding hyperbole and overgeneralization, Glasser and Baker also show convincingly that you *can* make value judgments about the final outcome—even when the standoff is not between white and black hats, but those wearing shades of gray. And the attention that Baker and Glasser give to sources and documentation makes their account one that will be referenced for years by scholars and analysts.

This delicate mix of reporting and analysis is repeated throughout the book. The theme of pluralism's erosion goes well beyond the chapter on the media; it reappears in their accounts of the "the dictatorship of the law" (as opposed to the rule of the law), the 2003 parliamentary and 2004 presidential elections, and the arrest of Khodorkovsky. After *Kremlin Rising*, the reader can only be alarmed about democracy's future in Russia. And since publication, the trend line has only continued downward. Parliament has been considering legislation that would dramatically increase the state's control over civil society, and ban foreign and international nongovernmental organizations altogether.

In exchange for rolling back democracy, and isolating Russian society from the rest of the world, Putin has promised the Russian people security and prosperity. He believes that a more autocratic, less pluralistic, regime will make the Russian state stronger and more effective. Indirectly, Glasser and Baker offer a preliminary assessment about Putin's hypothesis about regime type on the one hand, and economic growth and security on the other, and the assessment is a contradictory one.

In their fun chapter on boom town Moscow, they discuss the economic growth that has occurred on Putin's watch. Whether Putin's growing autocracy had anything to do with this growth is difficult to discern; there is no evidence of causality in *Kremlin Rising*. But through a discussion of one family with a daughter doing well in Moscow, and a son struggling in a provincial town, Baker and Glasser also capture the uneven development of Russia's economic expansion.

This book also helps to explain how

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economic growth has helped to mute public criticism of Putin's autocratic ways. As a beneficiary of Moscow's boom explains, "The *Cosmo* reader doesn't want to know about politics, nationalism, terrorism, anything gloomy." This trade-off—political liberty for economic liberty, or the freedom to read *Cosmopolitan* but not watch an independent NTV—seems to be one many middle-class Russians are willing to take for the foreseeable future.

Putin's promises about security, however, have not been realized. The regime is more authoritarian, but his state is no more effective at fighting terrorism than the state he inherited in 2000. *Kremlin Rising* provides riveting and depressing evidence of this state weakness, from the rotting military, to the *Nord-Ost* terrorist attack in downtown Moscow in 2002, to the gruesome terrorist attack in Beslan in the summer of 2004, which serves as coda for the book. All of these chapters, but especially the chapter on Beslan, underscore how serious the terrorist threat remains in Russia, and how terribly inept the Russian state remains in fighting terrorism.

If democracy's erosion in Russia is as serious as it is portrayed here, why does President Bush seem so blasé about it? In his second inaugural address, and in many other inspiring speeches, Bush has pledged to stand against tyranny and with democrats in all parts of the world. Yet he continues to mute his message when meeting with Putin, even though Russia has experienced a more dramatic rollback of democracy than any other country in the world while Bush has been president. In their chapters on diplomacy, Baker and Glasser only tiptoe toward an explanation. The subject demands its own book. But in this truly definitive account of the Putin era, *Kremlin Rising* may help to be part of the solution. No one can read it and not feel uneasy about Russia's short-term future.

The next time Natan Sharansky visits the White House to offer counsel on how to advance liberty around the world, *Kremlin Rising* is the book he should give the president. ♦

The Grand Old Man

What Gladstone thought about church, state, and Victorian Britain. BY EDWARD SHORT

In his first book, *The State in Its Relations with the Church* (1838), written when he was still the Conservative MP for Newark, William Gladstone argued that the English state was morally obliged to uphold Anglicanism because it was "that form of belief which contains the largest portion of the elements of truth with the smallest admixture of error."

The Mind of Gladstone
Religion, Homer, and Politics
by David Bebbington
Oxford University. 352 pp., $95

This was an especially quixotic contention at a time when the liberal Whigs had effectively appropriated the Established Church to foil their Tory opponents, who were the traditional advocates of the prerogatives of the Church. Nevertheless, Gladstone was genuinely solicitous about the spiritual well-being of his compatriots, and always insisted that politics serve religion. Writing to his father when he was 24, he defended the dignity of ministerial office on the grounds that "nothing could compete with the grandeur of its end or of its means, the restoration of man to that image of his Maker which is now throughout the world so lamentably defaced."

Macaulay reviewed Gladstone's theoretical paean to the Church of England in the quintessentially liberal *Edinburgh Review*, and saw only an apology for "roasting dissenters at slow fires."

> If the propagation of religious truth be a principal end of government . . . if it be the duty of a government to employ for that end its constitutional power . . . if the constitutional power of government extends . . . to the making of laws for burning of heretics . . . if burning be . . . in most cases, a most effectual mode of suppressing opinions; why should we not burn?

After this merciless *reductio ad absurdum*, Macaulay relented and expressed the hope that young Gladstone would "not suffer political avocations so entirely to engross him, as to leave him no leisure for literature and philosophy." He needn't have bothered. Gladstone sat in the House of Commons for over 60 years, and led four governments as prime minister, but he always found "leisure for literature and philosophy." James Joyce no doubt had this aspect of the man in mind when he referred to him as "like a portly butler who has gone to night school."

Gladstone wrote over 30 books and scores of articles. In *The Mind of Gladstone*, David Bebbington delves into these neglected materials "to uncover the structure and development" of Gladstone's ideas. The result is a lively, deeply researched book that should coax readers to look again at that most peculiar concoction, Gladstonian liberalism. Earlier Gladstone scholars from John Morley to H.C.G. Matthew chose to ignore these materials to concentrate on the political career. Bebbington shows that the statesman's political interests were "intertwined" with his religious and intellectual interests, and cannot be understood apart from them.

St. Augustine, one of Gladstone's heroes, once said that "no one should give up entirely his delight in learning, for the sweetness he once knew may be lost and the burden he bears over-

Edward Short is at work on a book about John Henry Newman and his contemporaries.

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whelm him." Gladstone's voluminous diaries prove that no burden—whether it was the threat of insurrection in Ireland or the menace of the Mahdi in Egypt or the debacle of Majuba Hill in South Africa—ever kept Gladstone from gratifying his "delight in learning." Entry after entry records the inveteracy with which this indefatigable statesman devoured books. Whether his reading enabled him to bear his political burdens with any more fortitude is doubtful: He complained ceaselessly about what he considered the slavery of public life. Reading certainly did not enable him to conduct his foreign policy with any more skill or success.

One frequently hears complaints of the philistinism of politicians. Gladstone's career illustrates how philistinism, far from hampering, might actually discipline a statesman. No one can look dispassionately at Gladstone's career without agreeing with Walter Bagehot that it is not the intellectual who makes the best statesman but the capable man of business. For Bagehot, the man who most fit this pragmatic bill was Sir Robert Peel, who repealed the protectionist Corn Laws, and gave the English their first metropolitan police force.

"In common life," Bagehot argued, "we continually see some men as it were scarcely separable from their pursuits. . . . It is so with Sir Robert Peel. So long as constitutional statesmanship is what it is now, so long as its function is the recording of views of a confused nation, so long as success in it is confined to minds plastic, changeful, administrative—we must hope for no better man. You have excluded the profound thinker; you must be content with what you can obtain—the business gentleman."

A notable exception was the Marquess of Salisbury, the Conservative prime minister about whom Andrew Roberts has written so memorably, who demonstrated not only exceptional perspicacity—he wrote brilliant political journalism for the *Saturday Review*—but also consistently sound political judgment, which Gladstone so glaringly lacked.

David Bebbington, professor of history at the University of Stirling and an authority on 19th-century British evangelicalism, would doubtless disagree. His Gladstone is not only a profound thinker but a prophetic politician. Bebbington defends these highly arguable claims by pointing out that Gladstone's thinking influenced the communitarian thinking of Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, and that his insistence on the community of nations inspired the opponents of Stalin and Hitler. Woodrow Wilson, who had a photograph of the great man hanging over his desk when he was hatching the Fourteen Points, was also a fan. (Theodore Roosevelt spoke for critics of both Gladstone and Wilson when he said that "a milk-and-water righteousness unbacked by force is . . . as wicked as and even more mischievous than force divorced from righteousness.")

Bebbington might have also cited the historian J.L. Hammond, who heaped extravagant praise on Gladstone in his *Gladstone and the Irish Nation* (1938), observing of Gladstone's readiness to champion Irish home rule when it was neither popular nor profitable: "In a world where armed strength was becoming more and more the undisputed master, a great statesman was asking one of the leading peoples to make its undoubted power obey the unarmed voice of justice. It is difficult to believe that Europe would not have had a nobler history if there had been a Gladstone in each of the great States moving so steadily towards war."

The idea of a Europe full of Gladstones is rather dizzying. In any case, it is questionable whether Gladstone would have been effective against Hitler, given his well-known aversion to force, which needlessly cost General Gordon his life at Khartoum.

The most balanced chapter of the book reexamines Gladstone's highly eccentric brand of liberalism, to which he converted in 1850 after going to Naples and witnessing how the Neapolitan government was persecuting the liberal minister Carlo Poerio and his followers for their support of the constitution of 1848. Gladstone attended Poerio's trial and was present when the government sentenced him to 24 years' hard labor in chains. He even managed to gain admittance to the dungeon where Poerio and thousands of other hapless political prisoners were being left to languish.

There Gladstone discovered a truth about European conservatism that he never forgot. As he wrote to Lord Aberdeen, the foreign secretary:

> It is the wholesale persecution of virtue. . . . It is the awful profanation of public religion. . . . It is the perfect prostitution of the judicial office. . . . It is the savage and cowardly system of moral as well as physical torture. . . . This is the negation of God erected into a system of government.

After this revelation, Gladstonian liberalism was born. What it was, exactly, is not easy to say. The historian John Vincent says that "it was an intelligent way of making the best of a weak international position." Where Benjamin Disraeli might have sought to create the illusion of state strength, Gladstone worked to create the illusion of state morality. G.M. Young says it consisted of "a horror of all coercive powers, great or small—Empires, Papacies, Parliaments, Sultans, Colonial Offices, Trade Unions—which do not rest their authority on consent, habitual or expressed." For H.C.G. Matthew, the editor of Gladstone's diaries, it was "fiscal probity." Bebbington sees it as having been less liberal than communitarian, embodying Gladstone's conviction that "sectional selfishness, at whatever level, must give way to the common good."

Whatever it was, it had nothing to do with our own liberalism. In a speech he gave in 1877, he confirmed one of his most fundamental political convictions:

> The best thing a government can do for the people is to help them to help themselves—that is, to remove the obstacles which are in the way of their so helping themselves. I have no faith in any system of Government which strikes at the root of human freedom; and if any Government pretends that it teaches

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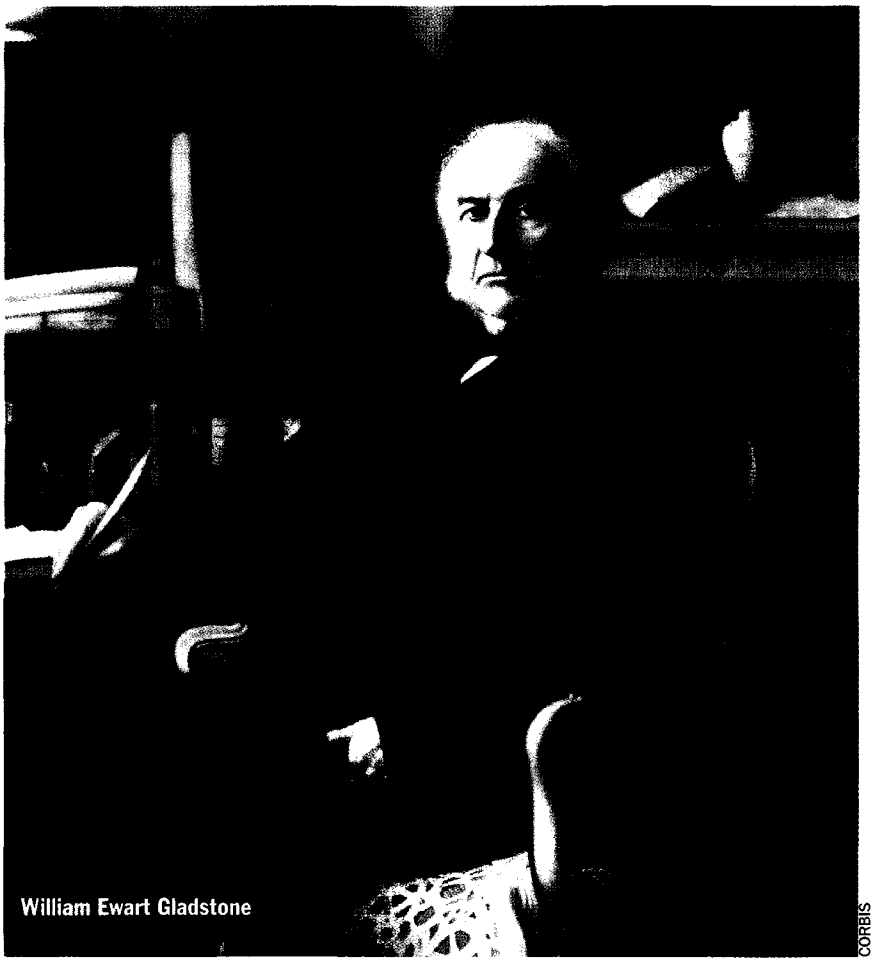
men how to live, that it will undertake the finding for them of what as citizens and fathers of families they ought to find for themselves, the Government, be its intentions good or bad, is not conferring a benefit, but inflicting an injury on the people.

As Bebbington remarks, "So much for the nanny state." Gladstone was equally illiberal—in our own terms—when it came to the study of the past. The seminaries of self-loathing and grievance into which our liberal elites have turned universities in both America and Great Britain would have appalled Gladstone. In 1885, he put up the money to replace Edinburgh's market cross, and in an eloquent speech reaffirmed his Burkean commitment to the past:

> It is in my judgment a great misfortune to any country when it finds itself or thinks itself under the necessity of breaking the ancient traditions. It is a degradation to men to be reduced to the life of the present; and never will he cast forth his hopes, and his views, and his efforts towards the future with due effect and energy, unless at the same time he prizes and holds fondly clasped to his heart the recollections of the past.

Readers of John Henry Newman will be interested to see what Bebbington makes of Newman's influence on the Grand Old Man. Bebbington is right that Gladstone agreed with Newman that evangelicals laid too much stress on self-contemplation. What G.M. Young called "the intense introversion of Evangelicalism" was something to which Gladstone was prone all his life. His diary exhibits the anguish this caused him. When he read Newman recommending that we "shun the contemplation of our own feelings, emotions, frame and state of mind," and concentrate instead on the Lord, he must have responded with a certain relief. Then, too, Gladstone's experience of the rise of unbelief could only have verified the accuracy of Newman's claim that self-contemplation imparted principles that would "destroy all positive doctrine, all ordinances, all good works . . . foster pride, invite hypocrisy, discourage the weak, and deceive most fatally, while they profess to be the especial antidotes to self-deception."


William Ewart Gladstone

CORBIS

Where Gladstone differed with Newman was in seeing self-deception not in Anglo-Catholicism, which Newman came to see as a "mere theory and illusion, a paper theology that facts contradict," but in Roman Catholicism, about which Gladstone gave out that "no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom."

Bebbington is wrong to suggest that, by embracing Newman's critique of evangelicalism, Gladstone was embracing Tractarianism. In his conclusion, Bebbington admits as much himself when he says that Gladstone, after his conversion to liberalism, turned away from Tractarianism, which, after all, had been responsible not only for his two best friends, James Hope-Scott and Henry Manning, but also his sister, Helen, converting to Roman Catholicism. Worst of all, from Gladstone's standpoint, was the effect that Tractarianism had on Newman, from whose desertion, Disraeli predicted, the English Church would never recover. It was to distance himself from Tractarianism that Gladstone adopted the positions of Broad Churchmanship.

Later, it is true, he embraced what Bebbington refers to as "the liberal Catholicism of Charles Gore and his *Lux Mundi* circle that blended high ecclesiastical claims with wide intellectual and social sympathies," but this was something rather different from Tractarianism. And incidentally, Gore was not a liberal Catholic; he was a liberal High Church Anglican. For Bebbington, this later affiliation aligns Gladstone with the future because, as he says, these were the ideas that would "dominate the Church of England into the middle years of the 20th century"—which is a comical *non-sequitur*. So many of the ideas that the Church of England held "in the middle years of the 20th century" it has since blithely repudiated.

In refuting the mandarin agnosticism of the biologist T.H. Huxley and

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Fitzjames Stephen, a lawyer, who spoke frequently against revealed religion at meetings of the Metaphysical Society, Gladstone had recourse to St. Augustine's famous dictum *securus judicat orbis terrarum*: The whole world judges rightly. For Gladstone, Bebbington observes, "Lawyers possessed no monopoly of reasoning skills; nor did the agnostics have a privileged avenue to truth. As in the national debate over the Eastern Question that was raging at the time, the mass of the people rather than the knot of so-called specialists seemed to Gladstone to have right on their side. The general consent of civilized humanity was preferable to the sectional opinion of an intellectual aristocracy."

As this shows, Bebbington can be a judicious commentator. Certainly he is right to recognize that in Gladstone's greatest debate, the debate over the Vatican Decrees, "There can be little doubt that Newman showed Gladstone's fears about the loyalties of the Catholic community to be alarmist fantasies."

Despite its inconsistencies, Bebbington's book is worth reading. He tackles a difficult subject that merits more attention. Perry Butler's monograph *Gladstone: Church, State and Tractarianism: A Study of His Religious Ideas and Attitudes, 1809-1859* (1982) is the only other useful study in the field. He provides astute analysis of the religious underpinnings of Gladstonian liberalism. He gives an excellent account of Gladstone's combative response to the rise of unbelief. On this topic, Richard Shannon, Gladstone's best biographer, recounts an amusing exchange between Gladstone and Mrs. Humphry Ward regarding her novel *Robert Elsmere* (1888), the hero of which jettisons his faith to pursue philanthropy. Mrs. Ward asked the old bibliophile if he had not read "the new lines of criticism," to which Gladstone fired back: "I don't believe in any new systems. . . . I cling to the old. . . . I believe in the degeneracy of man, in the Fall—in *sin*—in the entirety and virulence of sin, & sin is the great fact of the world." ♦

Wonkette: The Novel

A blogger's fictional debut is not exactly Anna Karenina. BY JUDY BACHRACH

I had been wondering why Wonkette, a witchy website devoted to mocking Washington politics in general, along with *Washington Post* columnist Tina Brown in particular, had grown so ghastly dull over the last months. I wasn't, mind you, wondering in a serious or methodical way; any website dragged into my personal Favorites column is practically guaranteed to turn into dross overnight. But still, the dissolution of its charm, the subsiding of its frothy send-ups of stuffy old pols, left me perplexed and faintly broken-hearted.

Riverhead Books

Dog Days
by Ana Marie Cox
Riverhead, 297 pp., $23.95

Now, of course, I understand completely what went wrong. Ana Marie Cox, the inspired wit behind Wonkette, was simply not concentrating. She was busy writing a novel. This was ill-advised. And not only for her website.

The heroine of *Dog Days* is named Melanie, or Mel, depending on the author's mood. And although the character's nominal job is that of a campaign worker for a Democratic candidate who resembles John Kerry in every particular ("Hillman did act like a robot sometimes"), right down to his romp-resistant yellow dog "who was about as excited about the Hillman campaign as most voters were," in fact Melanie has, according to her creator, other abilities:

> She had learned the tricks of a covert carnal operator, and part of her was as proud of this new-found skill as she was of memorizing the names and faces of each senator before she came to town. She knew which hotels in Washington would guarantee a noon check-in, what restaurants had separate entrances to the garage, and how many pairs of underwear she could fit into the side pocket in her purse intended for a cell phone. . . . Having an affair was like having a second job, Melanie thought, but the benefits made it worthwhile.

Had this paragraph appeared—oh, anywhere within the first 100 pages of the novel, it might have provided straightaway the answers to a number of nagging literary questions. Such as: Why should we care where this person stashes her underwear? Or: Hey, so that's why Kerry lost Ohio! But as it appears for no apparent reason within a hair's breadth of the last page, the reader is left slogging along through scores of room service moments and acres of Blackberry missives (these especially) without

Judy Bachrach is a contributing editor to Vanity Fair.

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the faintest idea of what it is that Melanie wants. A fine unmarried boyfriend? A victory for her candidate? Better relations with the press, whose egos and other delicate parts she is expected, as part of the "communications team," to stroke?

That the heroine shares our perplexity is no solace, believe me. She at least has the consolation of downing around eight martinis per paragraph. Or if martinis are in short supply, then a slug of bourbon, from which, Ms. Cox assures us, "the warmth ran jagged down her throat."

Nor is the jagged course of that throat her only physical ailment. In fact, despite her youth and evident beauty, it's obvious she is a medical mess. On one page, Melanie feels "a pressure on her chest like someone had tightened a belt around it." On the next, much the same calamity recurs: "All the air left her chest for an instant." It will take five full paragraphs—and no ambulance in sight—before: "Air filled her lungs again." But even then we are not out of the woods. Within short order, "The buzzy high of her anger dissipated. . . . Her shoulders were tight. Her jaw hurt. She felt like she had been in a fist fight."

Yes, there are moments of reprieve, even for Mel. Life is not all booze and beds and lousy polls. There are times she can even forget about the terrycloth robes at four star hotels with their too-short sleeves. She, after all, has a boyfriend with a miracle wardrobe ("the buttons on his shirt fumbled loose") and magnetic hands that seek her "heavy breasts." She also has the ears of a lynx. For how else to explain her ability to listen in on conversations at the Four Seasons Hotel restaurant while standing miles away from the tables? Never mind. To celebrate these assets she occasionally allows herself "a saucy toss of her head."

So, I'm really not sure about Ana Marie Cox anymore. Or maybe I am. This is just the kind of writing that Wonkette used to skewer. Perhaps Wonkette should have written this novel. ♦

Griffes on Record

The greatest American composer you've never heard.

BY JOHN SIMON

It is tragic how many dead American composers are buried again through neglect by American orchestras (which is not to say that most living ones fare that much better).

There are some obvious exceptions: Copland, Barber, Bernstein, Gershwin, and Ives—not all equally deserving—who get enough exposure. But what about so many worthy others, among whom, to name only my favorites, count Amy Beach, Paul Bowles, George Chadwick, Rebecca Clarke (granted, English-born), Arthur Foote, and Henry Hadley? And perhaps the most important of all, Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920).

Though he is performed on rare occasions, I have never been able to catch a live performance of his music. Penguin's *New Dictionary of Music* puts it succinctly about Griffes: "Overworked, through poverty, and died of pneumonia." But Penguin is wrong. Though far from affluent—a music teacher at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York—he was not exactly a pauper; and death—horrible at age 35—was caused by empyema, stemming from a combination of emphysema, influenza, and pneumonia.

Yet poverty had something to do with it. Lacking the money to pay copyists for orchestral parts, he sat up nights writing them out himself—this on top of arduous school teaching and private piano lessons to make ends meet. Add to this the excitement of much-delayed recognition in his last year or so, causing nervous as well as physical exhaustion. After a painful illness and unsuccessful operation on his lungs, he died in a New York City hospital on April 8, 1920.

John Simon writes about theater for Bloomberg News.

Griffes was born in Elmira, N.Y., on September 17, 1884. He took fitful piano lessons from an elder sister, but not until he was 11 did the family find him a real teacher in the person of the eccentric and redoubtable New Zealand spinster Mary Selena Broughton, professor of piano playing at Elmira College. Since Charles's father, a shirt-cutter and clothing-store clerk, could hardly afford the youth's advanced training, which at that time only Germany could offer, it was the devoted Miss Broughton who provided most of the money (which Charles eventually scrupulously repaid) for the 19-year-old's four years of study in Berlin from 1904 to 1907.

Griffes initially viewed himself as a concert pianist, although he once boasted that he would become the greatest composer in the world. He enrolled at the Stern Conservatory, which he attended fairly regularly for two years, working with some good teachers. For the next two years, he took mostly private lessons, including a dozen or so with Engelbert Humperdinck, the composer of *Hansel und Gretel*. He also gave piano lessons, although he became aware that he was not going to become a true virtuoso: His hands, he felt, were too small, and he had started too late. Thus, composing became his goal. He made some valuable friendships, notably with a 28-year-old student at the Technische Hochschule, Emil Joel, who became his first lover, and whose knowledge of music and German life proved especially useful. The four Berlin years, Charles sadly noted, passed "frightfully quickly."

Upon his return to America, Griffes

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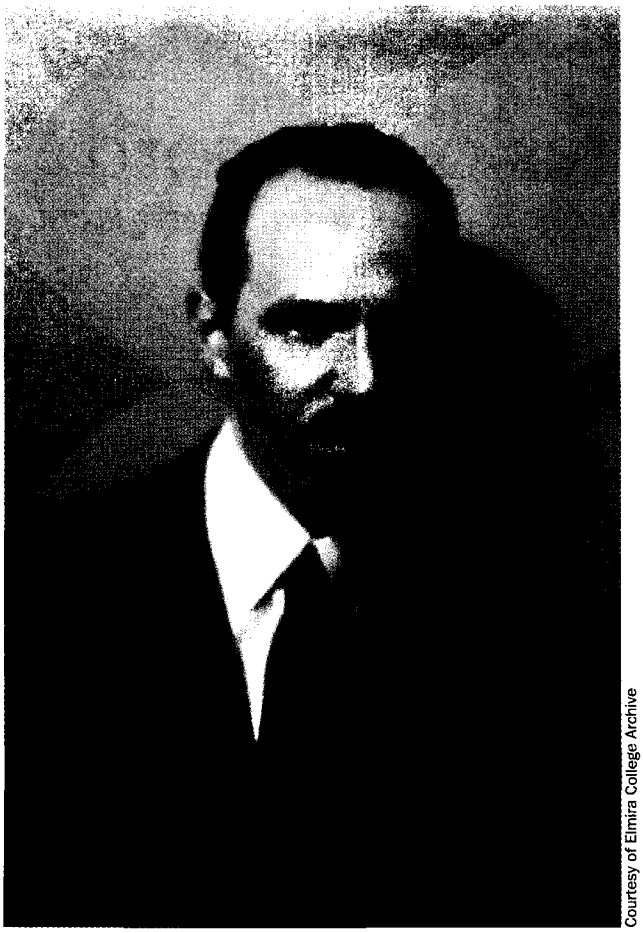

Courtesy of Elmira College Archive

Charles Tomlinson Griffes

landed the job of director of music at Hackley, which was to remain his underpaid and detested lifelong position. Though his chores were onerous and severely encroached on his composing, Tarrytown was only an hour's train ride from New York, where he spent most of his free time, absorbing culture, making friends, composing (mostly during vacations), pursuing his homosexual love life, and assiduously promoting his music. Even so, rejections by publishers, musicians, and critics made life difficult—until, ironically, near the end—and made shedding hated Hackley impossible.

What sort of music did Griffes write? While studying in Germany and setting, among others, a great many German poems, his music was largely German-influenced, which at the time meant chiefly Wagner and Richard Strauss. But ever a learner and self-renewer, he fell under the salutary spell of Debussy and Ravel. This was his "American Impressionist" phase, climaxing in such marvels as "The White Peacock" and other "tone pictures." Next came the Russians, Mussorgsky and, especially, Scriabin. After a brief Amerindian phase, there followed the important Oriental one, chiefly Arabian and Japanese. Finally, what might be called the Modern, represented by Busoni, Schoenberg, Varese, and, perhaps, also Bloch, Milhaud, and Prokofiev.

Here it behooves me to quote Donna K. Anderson, the preeminent living Griffes scholar:

> Griffes spent his life in an incessant search for a musical language that could fulfill his own artistic personality. . . . In the last analysis, [he] was a self-made artist. He was neither decisively shaped nor permanently influenced by any one person or any one prevailing musical style—inspired, yes; guided, of course; but never artistically dominated. . . . Griffes's artistic credo was uniquely his own—the product of his curiosity, his desire to assimilate and turn to his own use every possible experience, his vivid imagination, his driving ambition, his modesty and utter lack of pretense, his search for artistic fulfillment, and, finally, his devotion to his art. These traits enabled him to emerge in the scant 12 years and 7 months that separated his return from Berlin in 1907 and his death in 1920, as one of America's most significant composers.

I heartily second the declaration by the American composer and critic Deems Taylor that Griffes's premature death was "the greatest musical loss this country has sustained." Only the early demise and lack of spare time prevented Griffes from equaling the achievement of a Barber or Copland. It is worth noting that, upon Griffes's death, an editorial in the not-always-perceptive *New York Times* observed, "We speak with pity or scorn of a public that would let a Mozart or a Schubert die and think that those bad old days are gone forever, but from time to time something uncomfortably . . . of the same sort is revealed in the present."

Similarly, the acerb Norman Lebrecht refers to Griffes as an "American prodigy of Mozartian lifespan." But Mozart and Schubert were more precocious or less burdened by other pressures—Griffes even had to support on his meager earnings his mother and unmarried sister—enabling them to produce a much more copious oeuvre than Griffes, who, moreover, was a perfectionist, endlessly revising his works.

He was, to his credit, a continual evolver, and not only in music. Besides being a charming watercolorist and fair photographer, he read tirelessly and exploringly in four languages. It could be Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* or *The Playboy of the Western World* ("A wild thing!") or the travel books of Edmondo de Amicis ("Certainly nobody else's travel books came up to his. In the Tangier section he says something interesting about the Arabian music"). Coleridge's "The Wanderings of Cain" would be "a good subject for a melodrama with piano," and Octave Mirbeau's sadistic novel *The Torture Garden* was both repellent and fascinating. As Edward Maisel, his able biographer, mentions in *Charles T. Griffes: The Life of an American Composer*, he could be "simultaneously reading Dante's *Divina Commedia* and Elinor Glyn's *Reflections of Ambrosine* and finding both enjoyable."

Let us consider Griffes's piano music, some of his finest and most plentiful. Its undoubted climax is the Sonata of 1917-18, revised in 1919. Donna Anderson has documented at ample length the extensive rewriting that went into it, and Maisel provides a lengthy musical analysis. This "shock-

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ingly original sonata," as Virgil Thomson called it, is a seminal work. David Dubal refers to it as Griffes's "most painful and frenzied score . . . which fully reflects [his] ear for piano sonority and color." And here is the British music critic Wilfrid Mellers about this "extraordinary" sonata: "Sophisticated as the idiom is, [it is] music of the asphalt jungle [that] could have been created only in America." Elsewhere Mellers speaks of it as "disturbingly powerful . . . an American parable in musical terms, telling us what happens to the ego alone in the industrial wilderness."

Chris Taggard

The Hackley School: 'Only an hour's train ride from New York.'

Well, perhaps.

Faubion Bowers, the Scriabin expert, wrote of it in a 1972 review in the *Village Voice*:

> Had Griffes been less deracinated . . . and had he roasted corn-on-the-cob and chilled apple cider as did our main claim to international worth, that other Charles, Ives [nice irony, this!], then perhaps Griffes would not be languishing in the oblivion he suffers at the present. . . . The Sonata . . . is a striking, virtuosic masterpiece replete with melodic and harmonic invention. . . . How advanced Griffes was for those days, and how difficult it was for a composer to be innovative when ears then were rejective rather than accepting, as they are now. Of course, so many evaporating sonorities and languid colorations in constant succession give from time to time the impression of a spineless man in search of the braces of a tune or firm idea. Still, the fragrance of Griffes's greatness lingers in the mind as the chief point of the concert.

Evaporating and languid must refer to other Griffes pieces on the program; about the Sonata there is none of that. I like to think of a piece of music as a living organism, with rhythm for its skeleton, melody for its flesh, and harmony as its skin. These must not only be fine in themselves but also cohere perfectly. In Griffes's Sonata, they do. The work appears on four currently available CDs, of which I have tracked down three.

Denver Oldham, on *Charles Tomlinson Griffes: Collected Works for Piano* (New World Records) is somewhat choppy and foursquare, but Edward Maisel's booklet notes are helpful. David Allen Wehr on *Charles Tomlinson Griffes* (Connoisseur Society) is elegant and poetic, with perhaps the slightest exaggeration of dynamic contrasts. On the two-CD *Charles Tomlinson Griffes: Complete Piano Works* (Naxos), Michael Levin delivers a well-rounded, solid performance.

Volume One of the Levin CD contains, after the Sonata, *Three Tone-Pictures* (1910-15), graceful landscape evocations with the kind of titles Griffes would affix *a posteriori*, to make the music more salable. The *De Profundis* of 1915 gets its title from a poem by Fiona MacLeod (pen name of William Sharp, a mediocre poet favored by Griffes). It strikes me, not unpleasantly, as sophisticated salon music. The *Roman Sketches* (1915-16) are four little gems, two of which Griffes later orchestrated. Among them, *The White Peacock*—based both on a Sharp poem and on an albino bird Griffes admired in the Berlin zoo—is one of his three or four biggest hits, though I am just as fond of *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*, water music at its most lyrical. *Clouds* compares favorably with Debussy's treatment of the same subject.

The five other pieces on this CD are no less charming, although the transcription of the Barcarolle from the *Tales of Hoffmann* strikes me as unnecessary, and the *Prelude in B minor* is interesting mostly as proof that, at age 15, Griffes was already impressive. Echoes of Chopin and Liszt, Griffes favorites, crop up here and there, mostly to good effect. No one has mentioned Delius, though I detect parallels—and why not, given that both composers were Anglo-Saxon Debussyists?

Outstanding among the items on Volume Two is Griffes's most popular work, *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*. The *Three Preludes* (1919), Griffes's last, unfinished work, were intended to be five; they are brief, intelligent doodles, signposts toward new horizons. Highly characterful, however, are the *Three Fantasy Pieces*. "The Barcarolle" (1912) rocks melodiously, but rises to a couple of impassioned climaxes, even as the tide and waves may rise. "The Notturno" (1915) conveys compellingly a night of reined-in yearning and wistful medita-

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tion. "The Scherzo" (1915) starts with controlled intensity and culminates in sheer rapture. Various further, separate items round out this diversely alluring, magisterially played disc.

Alas, no single CD is devoted to Griffes's many superb contributions to the art song. There are, however, four flavorous specimens included on Deborah Voigt's recent *All My Heart* (EMI), with Brian Zeger on the piano. "The Half-Ring Moon," to words by John B. Tabb, about love's triumph over death, is langorously elegiac. "Pierrot," its lovely lyric by Sara Teasdale garbled in the booklet, has sprightly music to match the poet's bittersweet irony. "Cleopatra to the Asp" (Tabb again) aptly hails death's triumph over the pangs of foiled love. "Evening Song," to a poem by Sidney Lanier, conveys movingly, against a background of dying day, love's permanence.

The two available CDs of Griffes's orchestral works—with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony (New World Records) and JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic (Naxos)—feature some of the orchestral songs, though penny-pinchingly without texts. The *Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod* (1918) show how inferior poems can be ennobled by magisterial settings. They are all lovely, but one of them, "The Lament of Ian the Proud," is considered, Meisel tells us, Griffes's finest song by one critic and "surely one of the great songs in the English language" by another. They are sung decently by Barbara Quintiliani on Naxos, and even better by Phyllis Bryn-Julson on New World. Among the composer's most mature works, they are justly praised by Anderson for their "rhythmic vitality, sharply dissonant harmony, bold conception, and gripping power."

New World also offers the masterly baritone Sherrill Milnes in the early, nice, but derivatively set *Four German Songs*, as well as in *Song of the Dagger*, a powerful setting of a fierce Romanian folk poem about bloody revenge, with the voice and the piano in intricate counterpoint. The *Four Impressions* (1916), to poems by Oscar Wilde, are pretty enough in themselves, but the music does not quite match the meanings as it should; nor does Olivia Stapp's uneven singing do full justice to them.

We come now to the orchestral music. Naxos offers chiefly orchestral versions of piano pieces. What with Griffes's gift for orchestration, almost in the Ravel-Strauss league, these come off more impressively than the piano originals. *The White Peacock* is, of course, a popular favorite, and it gets a suitably impressionistic reading from Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic. Their *Bacchanale* (based on Scherzo) and *Clouds* are similarly winning. But the *Three Tone-Pictures* and *Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan* come off somewhat better on New World than on Naxos, even though the former is an analog recording transferred to CD. Ozawa's Bostonians simply play better than Falletta's Buffalonians, and Ozawa's faster, crisper pacing also helps.

From Naxos, however, you get digital sound, and the only available recording of the enchanting *Poem for Flute and Orchestra*, which, as Maisel reminds us, is "regarded by many as Griffes's most fulfilled and mature production." With Carol Wincenc as the impeccable soloist, this marvelously moody, by turns wistful, melancholy, and exultant ten-minute score, is alone enough to make the Naxos CD a must.

It is sad that Charles Griffes couldn't earn a better living from his compositions, sadder yet that he died so young. But it would be almost equally sad if you did not realize how much you would be missing by not acquiring these recordings. ♦

As He Lay Dying

The late Mr. Estrada goes home to Mexico—the hard way. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

If you go to the cinema to acquaint yourself with interesting and novel methods of torture and humiliation, then have I got a movie for you—especially if, for an added bonus, you enjoy the thought that the person being tortured and humiliated is a law-enforcement officer employed by the government of the United States.

The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada
Directed by Tommy Lee Jones

The film in question has a title so wretched that I can guarantee you the theater will be four-fifths empty when you go to see it. It's called *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, and it's not a negligible piece of work by any means. It's a genuine labor of love, a gorgeously photographed and haunting study of the border between Texas and Mexico and the people who live and work there. And it's shot through with an ornery originality that seems to emanate from its director and star, Tommy Lee Jones, who is among the most ornery and original American actors.

When asked why he would saddle his film with such a difficult name, Jones responded, "I like the title. If I were going to change it, I'd make it longer. It's a mouthful, and that's a good thing. I prefer to use the Spanish title, *Los Tres Entierros de Melquiades Estrada*. And if you can't say that, you need to see the movie twice."

It's understandable that Jones would want you to see his film twice, but after two hours of watching him

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD'S *movie critic.*

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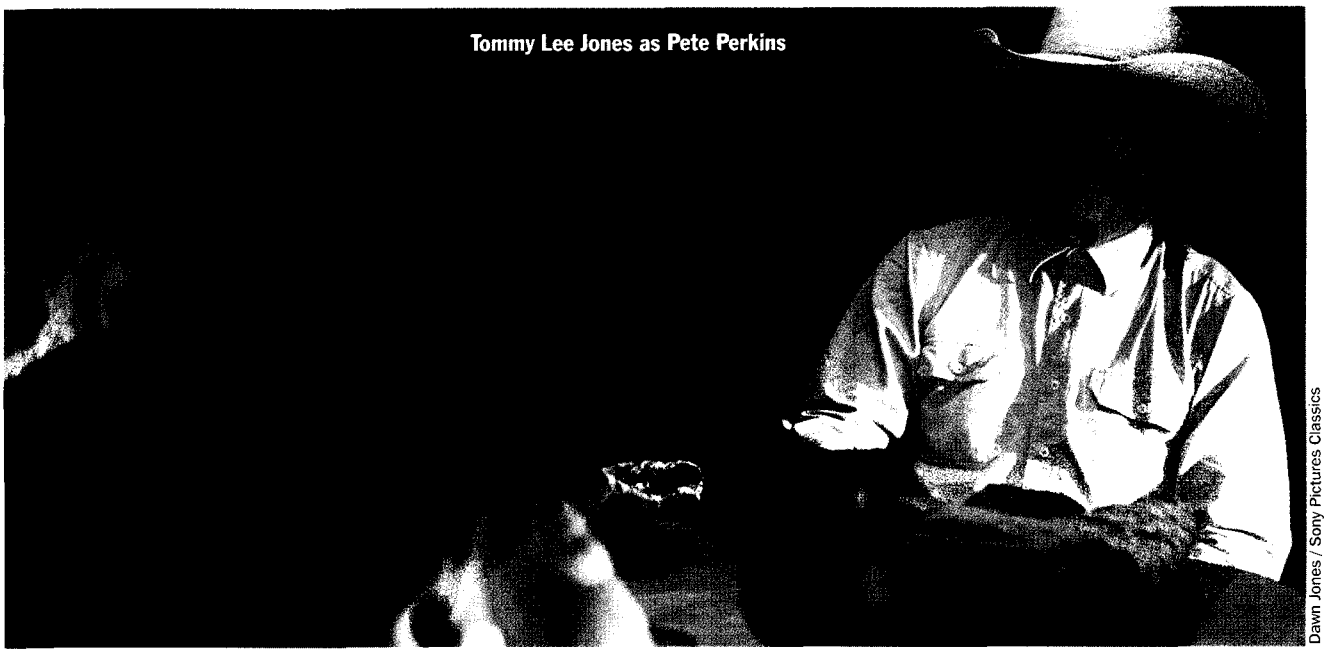
Tommy Lee Jones as Pete Perkins

Dawn Jones / Sony Pictures Classics

and his screenwriter, Guillermo Arriaga, devise new ways to punish the movie's central character, many moviegoers will have to think hard about whether they might want to attend a movie ever again.

The subject of the movie's wrath is Mike Norton (Barry Pepper), a young Border Patrolman who has just moved to a West Texas town with his pretty and pliable young wife. With a military crew cut, a joyless sneer on his face, a dehumanizing approach to making love to his wife and a copy of *Hustler* in his pocket for the long and lonely hours on patrol, Norton is a nasty piece of work. He seems to have joined the Border Patrol so that, while apprehending illegal aliens near the border, he can beat them up. And we see him doing just that to a lovely young woman.

"You were way out of line, boy," says Norton's superior officer.

"She was attempting to escape," Norton says, falsely.

One morning, Norton climbs out of his car in a remote valley with his *Hustler* in his hand when he hears gunshots. The shooter is Melquiades Estrada, a ranch hand and illegal alien who was shooting at a coyote to protect his goats. Norton assumes he is being targeted and kills Melquiades. He leaves the man's body there, but is stricken with a sickening guilt that makes the gulf between him and his wife even larger.

Melquiades's best friend is Pete Perkins (Jones), the ranch foreman. Perkins has promised to return Melquiades's body to his wife and children in Mexico if he died in the United States. And when he learns that Norton has killed his friend and isn't going to be punished for it—the local sheriff goes on vacation to avoid the whole matter—Perkins takes matters into his own hands.

Perkins kidnaps Norton and makes the Border Patrolman join him on a journey by horse to Mexico with the rotting body of Melquiades in tow. And here is what happens to Norton:

He is forced to dig up the body, causing a great deal of vomiting. He is handcuffed and beaten on three occasions by Pete Perkins. He runs away from Perkins and is stalked by him. He is starved. He gets bitten by a rattlesnake. He is assaulted by a Mexican woman who helps cure him of his snakebite. (She's the woman he punched when she was trying to cross the border.)

The point here, of course, is that Norton's treatment is cosmic payback—not for the killing of Melquiades, which was an accident, but for his own cruelty, racism, and soullessness. The torture he endures and the pain he suffers are, it turns out, intended to purify him. Melquiades died so that Mike Norton could live.

That's all well and good, but through most of the movie, what you're seeing is a man being punished and punished and punished—and a director who is taking lascivious pleasure in the pain he is inflicting. Like Sam Peckinpah, the director to whose extraordinarily violent Westerns *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* pays explicit homage, Jones loves the violence he shows so much that it makes his outraged depiction of Mike Norton's own cruelty a little hypocritical.

And more than a little political. In the world according to Tommy Lee Jones, the Americans of West Texas are all corrupt, crazy, mean, or stupid. The Border Patrol is, at best, incompetent and, at worst, evil. And the Mexicans? Well, they're wonderful, all of them, from strangers on the road offering food and drink to the Christ-like Melquiades himself.

Screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga has said he wanted "to make a study in social contrast between the land that's south of the Rio Grande river and the land that's north of it." The contrast is that the land north of the Rio Grande is far too impure to hold the sainted corpse of Melquiades Estrada, who tells Pete with disgust that he doesn't want to be buried amidst all the "billboards."

I'm an open-borders guy myself. But really, if Melquiades Estrada hated it so much here, all he had to do was jump on his horse and ride right on back to Mexico. The same goes for Guillermo Arriaga. ♦

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OFFICE OF
THE VICE PRESIDENT

The Hon. John Paul Stevens
United States Supreme Court
Washington, DC

Dear ~~Justice Stevens,~~ Jack

I was talking to Don Rumsfeld the other day about our time together in the Ford White House and, for some reason, a wave of nostalgia swept over me. In particular, I was thinking about how hard Don and I lobbied for your appointment to the Court when Bill Douglas stepped down.

It sure has been an amazing thirty years, hasn't it? I've taken particular note of your many opinions over that time and, as Lynne said the other night, I've always learned something new with each one. Anyway, since I've always remembered you as a keen eye in a duck blind, I was wondering if you might care to join me and Don and Brent Scowcroft next weekend for some quail hunting at my place on the Eastern Shore? And maybe a little reminiscing about the Mayaguez and the Bicentennial and the Pike Committee and all the crazy things we did in those days!

Give me a holler if you can make it.

Affectionately,

Dick

P.S. Don't forget your WIN button!

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

The Gas War

The brief dispute over gas prices between Russia and Ukraine lasted just long enough to offer a disquieting glimpse of the future—Russian extortion of the West

After arguing with Ukrainian officials over the price of gas, on January 1, 2006, the Russian company Gazprom abruptly decreased the supply of gas to Ukraine. This action triggered dramatic decreases in the amount of gas reaching Europe.

Why did the Kremlin pull this stunt? Because it hoped that the economic dislocation would undermine support for the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, and his party, Our Ukraine, in the March 2006 parliamentary elections. The price hike was all about politics.

The Russian action may have been directed at Ukraine, but it should be pondered in Washington. The current regime in Moscow cannot be trusted to behave as a rational and reliable partner of the West.

—Michael McFaul

That Rarest of Opportunities

Changes to the tax code occur all the time. Not so opportunities for reform

Since the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the tax code has been changed more than 15,000 times. Now riddled with targeted incentives, phase-out rules, and phantom tax rates, the tax code makes it impossible for most taxpayers to understand the rules, let alone to complete their own returns. The code contains at least five different definitions of "child," for example, while families that are interested in setting aside money for the future must attempt to choose among 401(k)s, 403(b)s, 457 plans, 529s, IRAs, Roth IRAs, Coverdell saving accounts, and Health Saving Accounts.

As members of the President's Advisory Panel on Tax Reform, we have become convinced that the country now faces a rare opportunity to simplify and improve the tax code. This presents an opportunity for the most wide-ranging reform since the Tax Reform Act of 1986 itself.

—Edward P. Lazear and James M. Poterba

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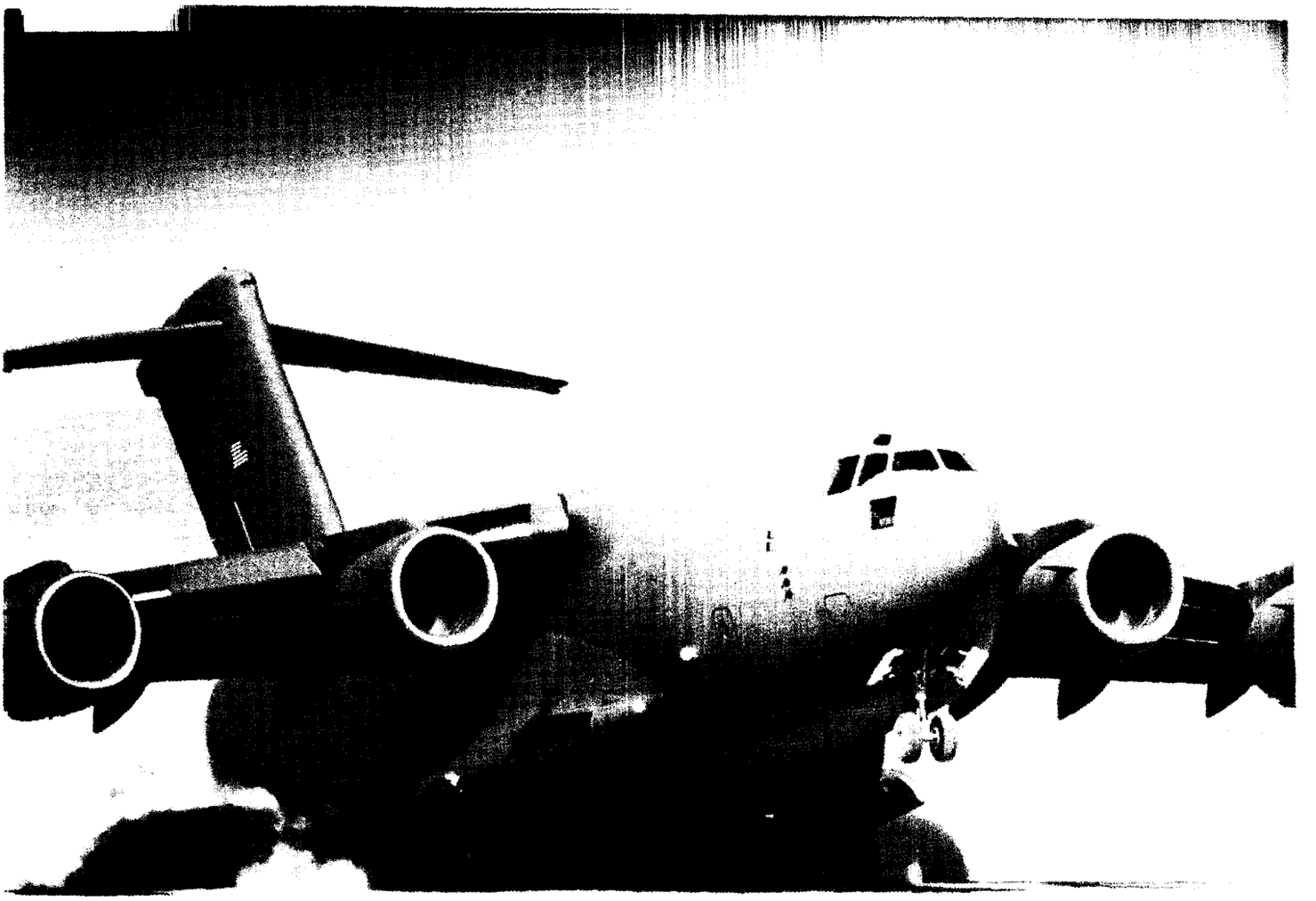

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